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Clergy Corner



IN UNITY

MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP
OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES

APRIL/MAY 1980

the bottom line

Save the lesbian lizards...

t. earlye scott

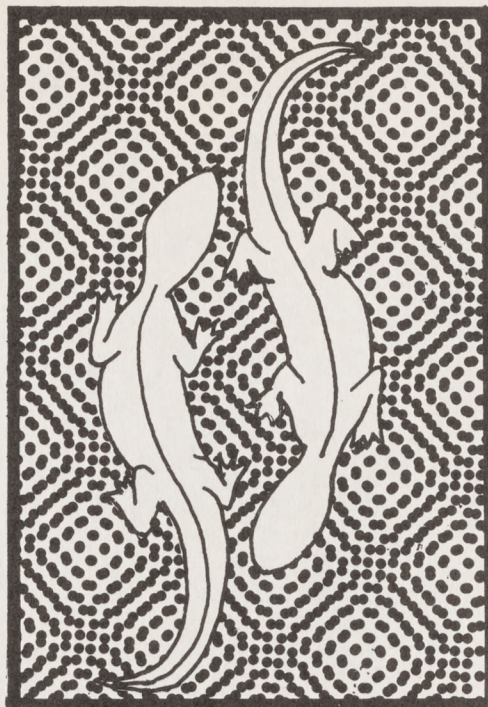
Did you know that scientists have recently discovered a species of lesbian lizards? It's true. Ain't that wonderful!

This all female species (maybe they're Amazon lizards) lay eggs just like other lizards, but these lesbians only have female offspring. Because they are parthenogenic they do not require sex with a male lizard in order to produce, lay and hatch their babies. Even though sex is not a necessity, the lesbian lizard apparently enjoys sex with other lesbian lizards. This has scientists baffled. It's baffling to me why they would be baffled.

In addition, the scientists claim that the lesbian lizards are into role playing and role reversal. During one sexual encounter a particular lizard will be a passive partner but will become an active one when with a different lizard. (Good thing they don't carry keys.) The passive partner lays larger eggs.

TIME magazine recently ran an article about these lesbian lizards and their culture. They reported that scientists called the sex between the lizards "male-like behavior." Sound familiar? They continued to say that the scientists can't understand why the lizards "mock" the male-female behavior. They also believe that they have found the first evidence in the animal world where sex and sexuality are independent of each other.

The article continued to say that the lizards are probably compensating for a life without male lizards or that they have hang ups from the "good old days of male-female sex."



You may be able to guess what steps the scientists are now taking. They are giving hormones to the eggs in hopes of producing the first male offspring.

Are the scientists hoping that if they are successful at altering the sex of the egg and producing the desired male lizard, that the lesbian lizard will want to engage sexually with the guys rather than their obviously preferred female companions? Are they hoping that the lizards will also begin requiring sex with a male in order to procreate? What indeed are their motives?

I'm wondering if the boy babies will become gay males or if the lesbian lizards will have their children taken away from them if they don't cooperate with the scientists. But I'm very angry that they're trying to mess with these dykes. I think we need to save the lesbian lizards and get the scientists to leave them alone. They're happy the way they are and don't need male lizards messing up their environment and happy homes.

If you are concerned about this why not express your opinion by writing IN UNITY or better yet writing TIME magazine. The address to TIME is Time & Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York, N.Y. 10020. You might even want to write Harvard where the research team is being headed by David Crews, a psychologist.

If you care about the lesbian lizards let them know. You might be saving their lives, or their right to choose their sexual orientation.



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God is not the 'Man' upstairs!

By Rev. Denis Moore
MCC of Hawaii

The second of the Ten Commandments tells us that we should not make for ourselves any "graven image" of the Deity. But how often do we examine the image of God which is "graven" on our imagination? Since the human mind cannot conceive infinity, Beingness which extends beyond time and space, we form pictures of the Divine that are derived from our religions and the common cultural representations we have inherited from the past.

The Metropolitan Community Church, both in Hawaii and nationally, is attempting to address this issue of how we image the Ultimate Reality and how we engage in "God-talk". We are immediately con-

fronted with several problems when we examine the ways in which religions, in our case, particularly the Christian religion, speaks and thinks about God.

1. There is a bias against women in the historic understanding and practice of religion, including mainstream Christianity. For example, the writer of First Timothy states: "Women should learn in silence and all humility. I do not allow them to teach or to have authority over men; they must keep quiet. For Adam was created first, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and broke God's law. But a woman will be saved through having children, if she perseveres in faith and love and holiness, with modesty." (I Timothy 2:11-15). This is a blatant example re-

flecting the prejudice against women which existed at the time of the writing of the New Testament. Because this bias found its way into the New Testament, it has encouraged sexism within our present society as if it were accompanied by Divine sanction. It is no accident that some of the strongest opposition to the ERA is from religious groups.

This bias has been reflected in our language about God. God is presented as "he", never "she". We have a "heavenly father"; what about our "heavenly mother"? God saves "man-kind", has a "son" (where is God's "daughter"?), and makes humanity, women and men alike, into "sons of God". Jesus is even spoken of as the "Son of Man"; now how is that for leaving women out! Where is the beingness

of women as women validated in all this? It reminds me of the old prayer of Jewish men: "I thank you, Lord, that I was not born a woman."

Since the biblical picture of humanity is that we are created "in the image of God", it is vital that both women and men see their humanity validated in the image of God presented by religious understanding. Our God-talk needs to be purged of its sin of omission, that of neglecting the femaleness of Divinity.

St. Paul, contrary to the popular trend of the time, reminds us that in Christ, race, status and gender are irrelevant (Galatians 3:28). However, we must recognize that old attitudes die hard, and religious sexism will not be defeated without a struggle.

2. God is not male; God is beyond gender. There are both female and male attributes within the Divine nature. It is our language, which is a reflection of our culture, that has hidden from us the femaleness of God; that has created a God who is male-only.

However, beneath the surface of these male-dominant trends, other forces have been working which have viewed femaleness in its full divine and human authenticity. For example, the Hebrew noun for Spirit as used in the Old Testament is a feminine word. (One might well consider the significance of this female recognition when pondering the idea of the virgin birth of Christ: that Mary conceived by being overshadowed by the Spirit.)

The Gnostic manuscripts discovered at Nag Hammadi actually ascribe superior spiritual insight to Jesus female followers, particularly Mary Magdalene.

Our spiritual heritage from God as female/Mother/sister and from women within our religious traditions has been rigorously suppressed. It must be regained!

3. We need to create a religious language that reflects the inclusiveness of the divine nature.

Inclusiveness of language does not mean losing what we have. We may relate to God as "our Father" but also expand our consciousness to include God as "our Mother". It is not necessary to neuter Jesus and deny him the maleness which was a part of his full humanity. But we may recognize that the eternal Christ is beyond gender. The physical form of Jesus as male is unimportant except as an affirmation of the genuine sharing of our life experience in the real world. Gender morphology does not exist in Christ where there is "neither male nor female ...but all are one."

People should be encouraged to retain in their consciousness those images of God

they find meaningful and precious, but to recognize them for what they are: not God, but human, finite *images* of the eternal and infinite Deity. Theologian Paul Tillich has called on the church to question all of our images of God, to worship the "God beyond God".

Ultimately, we need a state of expand-

ed consciousness that is beyond maleness and femaleness, rooted in the true and living God who is spirit, beyond gender, beyond image, beyond understanding.

This sermon was delivered at the Metropolitan Community Church of Hawaii by the Rev. Denis Moore on January 13, 1980.

reaction '80:

Dear Editor of the Evangelical MCC'er:

I have just read the first issue of the "Evangelical MCC'er." I find it as disturbing as you find other publications in the Fellowship. I am, by background, an evangelical and you do *not* speak for me. There is a deep difference between the evangelical point of view on Christianity and your view which implies that those who fail to say and believe things in exactly the format you have decided are not adhering to the New Testament.

I was initially concerned by the fact that nowhere, as I searched the pages of the publication, could I locate a name of any individual responsible. It is a common occurrence for us here at MCC San Francisco to receive mail which bears no return address and is unsigned. It is generally hate mail, or mail from some "Christian" who wants to tell us how wrong we are but is, for some reason, compelled to do so anonymously. I am not inclined to credit the writing of persons who refuse to identify themselves.

I am astonished that in your item 2 you claim that you are not "seeking to cause any disunity and/or division within our UFMCC" while the balance of the paper attacks the credibility of our doctrinal and policy stands. I point out to you that it is exactly this sort of rigid, exclusivist interpretation of Scripture which has driven gay Christians out of the Church of Jesus Christ (though not out of God's dominion) until recent years. Jesus told us to take care how we judge, unless we are willing to be judged in the same way. Unless you are willing to be judged by the private and exclusivist standards of others, you are on sandy ground.

No one has appointed either me or you to decide alone what MCC's doctrine is nor to be its guardian. We have a statement of faith which clearly delineates what we

believe to be the essentials of the Christian faith. If you wish to define your own doctrine more specifically, that is your privilege. It is *not* your privilege to insist that others agree or be accused of being out of harmony with the New Testament. If you have charges to level against sisters or brothers, charges based on evidence and not on your own opinion, there are mechanisms within our Fellowship for doing that. Pot-shots from the safety of anonymity remind me frighteningly of the publications of the "ex-gay" movements which play fast and loose with facts and which elevate their own interpretations of portions of Scripture to a level of veneration equal with Scripture itself.

I suspect that you will be surprised, sister or brother, at how many people will be sharing God's eternal dominion with you with whom you disagree, who do not share your opinion of "The Truth." I find your publication completely out of touch with the vision and inspiration of our Fellowship. The paper proclaims that many people share its views. I wonder. We are not even told who you are. I suggest, too, that you find another designation than "evangelical." You have not stated that point of view correctly and you have no corner on it. As a final, perhaps cheap shot, I suggest that you learn words before using them. The word is "ecumenism," not "ecumenicalism."

Yours in Christ,

The Reverend Michael E. England
Minister of Christian Education

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Deadlines for IN UNITY

June/July 1980 - April 15th, 1980
Aug/Sept 1980 - June 15th, 1980
Oct/Nov 1980 - Aug. 15th, 1980
Dec/Jan 1980-1981 - Oct. 15th, 1980

All are chosen

By Renee McCoy

"I now see how true it is that God has no favorites, but, that in every nation the one who is godfearing and does what is right is acceptable to God."

(Acts 10:34-35)

"...that God has no favorites..." A God for all people. An all accepting God. As Christians we all are called to believe that we are a part of one God, one Creator, one Love. The gospels herald that fact. Our UFMCC doctrine mandates that our congregations reflect that. Inclusivity is an inescapable requirement for being a true Christian Church. Still, it's a bit hard to believe and even harder to integrate into our lives. Our tendency is to reach before Christ into the Old Testament to worship a God with favorites, to on some level envision ourselves as "a chosen people." It's a difficult and humbling experience to realize that ALL are "chosen." It's difficult to accept that to see ourselves as any more or any less "chosen" is a direct violation of Christianity.

The desire to be chosen reaches beyond Christianity into the structure of this country. Historically, this nation has set up ways of controlling who is and who is not "chosen." The racial situation here, which touches every institution, not excepting UFMCC, has been one of the most vicious, destructive outgrowths of this tendency to be chosen, to be superior. One has but to look at the physical make-up and power structure of the United States, our communities, our churches, to see this particular mindset in motion. Within these institutions one can easily see how this works. We see ghettos for the self-proclaimed chosen which are clean, safe, comfortable, healthy (by some standards), economically stable, and governed by the self-proclaimed chosen. We see also ghettos for un-chosen which are dangerous, unhealthy (by any standards), demeaning cesspools breeding hopelessness,

despair and invisibility AND are governed by the self-proclaimed chosen. Within this society one can easily see the colonization of Third World people in a country born of a need to not feel the pains, the restrictions of being colonized subjects.

In theory, the roots of both the Christian vision and the American Dream lie in equality and justice, political and religious, for all. In practice, however, there remains a strong resistance to both the call of our faith and our constitution to include all who ARE in the ranks of all who live life with all its sacred and healthy benefits. Our communities continue to be divided into white and Third World ghettos, separate, unequal, un-American, and un-Christian. Our churches remain white institutions, evidence that our special message of the gospel is not reaching Third World Lesbians and Gay men (a quiet revelation is that it's REAL hard to spread the gospel to people who are not there to hear it!!)

The time has come to decide whether or not we wish to be chosen or Christian, chosen or American, chosen or alive. The decision is one which challenges the comfort that exists within secure social clubs under the banner of a Christian name and the comfort that comes with privilege in this society. The decision is one we'd rather ignore than make. In a book entitled *Color Blind: A White Woman Looks At The Negro* by Margaret Halsey, this conflict is presented quite clearly. She writes:

"What makes well-intentioned people ill at ease in their first contact with Negroes on a footing of equality is a conflict between opposing aspects of the civilization that formed them. On the one hand these people have been taught, and have taken seriously, the democratic concept of equality and the religious concept of brotherhood. On the other hand, they have been taught - in a thousand tiny, subtle ways and regardless of whether or not they were brought up in the South - to associate dark skin with spirituals, big feet, irresponsibility, Uncle Tom, Aunt Jemima, Rochester, Pullman porters, rape. There is no room for these two reactions - the democratic one and the popular-legend one - at the same time. Not, that is, if the person is to be at all comfortable."

Fortunately, this picture is not as dismal and hopeless as it may seem. At the last General Conference in Los Angeles, in 1979, UFMCC made provisions to dig itself from under the layers of negative racial

attitudes created by a history of chosen and un-chosen sewers. At General Conference, a Race Relations Task Force was created to deal directly with our need to experience and celebrate the all inclusive nature of Christianity. In response to a resolution from the Commission on Christian Social Action, the Board of Elders appointed me as Race Relations Director. The duties of such a position are to 1) compile and distribute educational material in the area of race relations to local churches; 2) establish and direct a race relations task force and continuously report to the Board of Elders on the progress of that committee; 3) serve as resource person to local churches in the area of race relations; 4) set up guidelines for establishing lines of communication between UFMCC and minority communities; and 5) coordinate on a Fellowship level and direct on local level programs geared at consciousness raising, education, assertiveness and leadership development within minority communities.

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Renee McCoy

RESOURCES

1

One of the goals of the Commission on the Laity is to enable laypeople to develop their own activities arising out of their own needs. Our members of the Commission have worked hard to facilitate this in their districts; the following shows some of the diversity of these projects. The members below are listed because of their willingness to serve as YOUR resource. If any of these lay activities interest you, feel free to write them. These members are ready to share information, materials, and advice about the process, difficulties and rewards of developing these projects with the laity of your congregation.

For information about:

District lay conferences
Group process and interaction
Witnessing and personal evangelism
District newsletter

Lay conferences
Enhancing 'family-sense' in the district

Lay worship services
Lay conferences
District newsletters

Laity workshops
Lay-clergy dialogs

Fellowship family

History of the laity
Layperson's Guide to MCC: The Church
Body Book

Write:

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27146 W. Six Mile Road
Redford, MI 48240

Editor speaks:

EDITOR SPEAKS -- I think it is important for the chair of the Commission on the Laity to understand that the General Conference did not approve a resolution that a "lay page" be required in In Unity. What the General Conference did do, however, was to approve the activities of the Commission on the Laity and one of those activities happened to be establishing a "Lay Page." The report had two parts. The first part dealt with what has already been accomplished. The second part was resolutions. The only mention of IN UNITY appeared in Part I.

The report from the Committee on Lay Concerns to the 1979 General Conference reads as follows. "Over the past year, the activities of the chair have been to provide resources and materials to all members, cross-pollenate projects and ideas from one part of the fellowship to another,

to encourage non-participating districts to join in the work of CLC (raising our membership from 6 to 10) provide "Information Sheets" for the input of lay concerns to each district rep, pass concerns and reports of the committee's activities onto the Board of Elders, to establish a Lay Page in IN UNITY for the broad dissemination of lay issues and perspectives and as a forum for each district rep to the fellowship as a whole, and, finally, to establish ties with the World Council of Churches' Department of the Laity for the exchange of information and materials."

I think it is a slap in the face to the laity to think they are only entitled to one or two pages on lay concerns. The whole magazine is a lay concern and the contents

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LAY CONCERNS

2

Feedback

TO THE EDITOR:

The Commission on the Laity appreciates the various "lay-centered" articles in the latest In Unity (Feb/Mar 1980). However, it strongly protests the co-opting of an article specifically submitted as the Commission's regular "Lay Page." I am referring to Jim Kerber's excellent article, "Ministering to Ministers" which was submitted by the Commission to In Unity following Mr. Kerber's successful workshop at his district lay conference. It had been solicited for the Lay Page and handed to the Editor for that spot. Instead, it was printed without any reference to the Commission on the Laity and In Unity carried no Lay Page at all.

Firstly, this Lay Page was approved in the Commission's report by General Conference IX. It cannot be eliminated at the whim of the magazine, much less without notice.

Secondly, it is an important, steady outreach of the Commission on the Laity. God knows we need articles about need for change in the laity and we applaud the fact that more are being printed. But if laypeople do not have the information that there is a Commission at work for them, they do not have access to their chance for change. The Lay Page has been our consistent and active presence in a Fellowship publication.

We respectfully request that not only our allotted space be restored but, in light of the new In Unity's interest in the laity, it be expanded.

It is an ironic situation when a Commission which is eager to contribute and whose goals are the same as those of In Unity has its articles absconded and its name deleted from your pages.

Sincerely,
Jean Gralley

The sick will recover (Mark 16:18)

Rev. Stan Harris
World Church Extension Coordinator
New Zealand

'Pastor, will you heal my body?' The young man suffering from Multiple Sclerosis looked up at me from his wheel chair as I passed down the aisle after a Service at MCC Melbourne, Australia; it was 1976. My hands began to tingle with an unaccustomed warmth. I quickly shrugged off the feeling and embarrassedly told him to "Pray about it to Jesus," and quickly, like the Pharisee, passed on my way.

Oddly enough, although some healings had taken place in my home Church, MCC Adelaide during the administration of Communion, I had not connected it in any

way with myself, after all, I was always taught that only Saints or Holy people could heal the sick because they were so close to God - so one can perhaps sympathise with my confusion when approached to 'heal' someone and my lamentable evasion of attempting to do so.

As time went by, however, I began - after much prayer and studying of Scripture - to occasionally pray for particular individuals who were ill, and also on at least one occasion to lay hands upon them, only to be astonished by the positive results! Either total deliverance from the illness or a gradual improvement over a period of time, much like a Prayer/Radiation "treatment."

Having transferred to Baltimore in March, 1977, I continued to study and

pray and after a battle royal with myself (after all, who wants to look foolish if it "doesn't work"?) I finally transformed our Wednesday Night Gospel Service into a Gospel/Healing Service. Almost at once there were wonderful results; Surgery sometimes cancelled, sometimes modified, persons healed after sending in their names for prayer, emotional and spiritual ills healed as much as physical ailments. In spite of the 'success', the Service is generally attended by only a few dozen, often less - the sick, and those who come to pray for them. Members and non-members, strangers and friends, Gay and Straight alike have been blessed by Christ's Healing Love.

The phenomena most reported during healing is that of a warm, 'electrical' tingling flowing through the hands of the minister, (I personally become very warm,



even in the dead of winter during these services) and a sense of Jesus' loving presence is powerfully felt in the Chapel/Hospital room. Individual members may at times feel led to assist me in laying hands on the sick after the anointing and are encouraged to do so. Prayer is the basis of the Healing Ministry, and for those who may be feeling led to this Ministry, I will roughly outline the method used by myself:

1. Prayer to drive out any negative forces in the name of Jesus to ensure that the sick will not be inhibited in receiving the Lord's healing touch.
2. Invitation to those who seek healing of body, mind or spirit to come forward to the Altar, where I have them sit - we don't have an Altar-rail, so kneeling is a problem, and if they stand there is a possibility of falling if overwhelmed;
3. Anointing; make a cross on the forehead with the oil, using the thumb (or index finger) in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.
4. Lay both hands upon the head with the intention to heal, praying as one feels led for healing of body, mind and spirit, frequently using the name of Jesus. (As the healing energy usually flows in 'bursts', the hands may actually tremble or shiver intermittently and one definitely feels power going out and being replaced, much like being a "drainpipe" (my description!) carrying off water.
6. One can usually tell when the prayer should end, the person being dismissed with a "peace be with you", they then return to their seats to pray with the rest of the Congregation for the healing of others also in need.

This is a far cry from what most of us have been used to. My own upbringing held the idea of the 'Royal Road of the Cross' which says that all sickness is maybe a punishment, or a means of spiritual strengthening or maturing process and like Calvary can have a redemptive value for the sins of others, hence why pray for healing? Yet if one gets a disease it is considered proper to go to a physician for medication, surgery, etc., but improper to pray to the 'Great Physician' for relief from the same disease! Even though Jesus Himself gave us the healing example! Now, this is not to say that some cases may not involve a special plan of God unknown to us (e.g. Paul's Sickness gave him a special opportunity to preach to the Galatians), but generally most sick people are neither edified nor spiritually blessed by their sickness and are more 'whole' when well. Doctors, surgery, medication, etc. I have always found to be richly enhanced when

connected with healing prayer, and often a two weeks stay in a hospital has been cut to a matter of days due to accelerated healing. Although many persons have, led by their own insight, discarded medication, etc. with excellent results, I don't feel it is the place of the Minister to suggest such things - I personally encourage people to pray over their medicine for maximum effect which has had good results.

One question I am often asked, which I guess I should deal with, is the Healing Ministry practised by the Church identical with 'Faith Healing' as practised by Spiritualistic Mediums? The answer is "No." Without getting too tangled in Metaphysics it is simply that Mediums, etc. draw either from their own psychic energy or from 'Guides' or 'Controls' (spirits of an unknown origin, or the dead, according to spiritualist teaching). Whereas in Christianity one is not 'conjuring up' power, nor is there any trance-like state, nor any 'controlling spirit'. Rather, Christ heals totally independent of our own state of mind, or what diet we follow or what preparation we make. Sometimes tragic results have been reported by Ministers who tried to 'heal' a spiritualist of an ailment or someone involved in such things, and it is often the practice to avoid such prayer - for the spiritualist's own safety - unless they be converted to Jesus Christ and abandon 'dealing with the dead' altogether. This is not meant to demean Spiritualism or its beliefs, but merely to state the fact that the two 'forces' don't mix.

The other often asked question is why are some people not healed?

In truth the reason for this is unknown. One hears various reasons ranging from "It's God's will" to "the person is too wicked". But probably the reasons are as many as there are angels on the head of a pin, so who can really say?

There is not space in this article for an in depth discussion on scriptural/Theological references regarding Healing, however I can share a few scraps of what I found and encourage you to begin your own search using a good Bible reference and concordance. In dealing with the idea that God does not 'will' that we should be cured of illness I found in Matt 8:1-4 when a leper said to Jesus that if He wanted to he could cure the leprosy, Jesus shot back "Of course I want to; be cured!" In making us whole, surely Jesus intends that the entire personality be 'delivered' and given the abundant life, and the effective Healing Ministry seems to support this idea. Mark's Gospel tells of the disciples being given healing powers and how

they anointed and laid hands on the sick and cured them (Mark 6:13). We learn of Jesus' promise that believers will perform the same works. "I tell you most solemnly, whoever believes in me will perform the same works I do myself, and will perform even greater works." (John 14:12). And that the early Church did in fact do these things (James 5:14, Acts, etc.) according to Christ's promise of 'powers' (Mark 16:16-20). The Gospels and Acts abound with healing miracles, and to infer that the early church had these powers merely as a religious 'trick' to win converts and is no longer operable is to deny our own experience and to contradict Jesus Christ "who is the same today as He was yesterday and as He will be forever." (Heb 13:8).

Even the scant scriptural references listed above - there are many more available - do, I feel, bring us to some conclusions: A. Jesus loves us and wants to heal us physically, spiritually and emotionally.

B. Jesus promised to bestow healing powers (among others) to His followers and all believers.

C. The Early Church exercised a Healing Ministry.

D. Jesus is changless in His love and compassion for us - the Church today. ergo:

E. That Ministry is still available to believers in this 'modern' day and age.

If the above conclusions are in keeping with the Holy Spirit's guidance, and our personal experience in many Christian Denominations in recent times has shown it to be indeed true, then as Christians who are a living part of the Body of Christ - The Church - need to become in truth the hands of Christ bringing healing to God's people.

Led by the same Spirit who descended upon the early Church we need to act on our Faith rather than give it mere intellectual assent. Let us reach out once more to those who suffer and put life into our Lord's words: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10). Healing is a vibrant sign of Jesus Christ's love for us, and abiding with us today. As Paul put it: "For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39). A deeper Scriptural study of the Healing Ministry can be found in "Healing" by Fr. Francis McNutt, OP. Bantam books. All Scripture References quoted from the "Jerusalem Bible".

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Spotlight:

By T. Earlye Scott

If you've ever tried to reach Rev. Troy Perry by telephone you had to go through this man. If you want an appointment with Troy Perry you have to deal with this man. If Troy needs something done he has to ask this man. This man is Frank K. Zerilli, the executive secretary of the Fellowship Office.

Frank Zerilli knows how to give an interview. He had me and my spouse over for dinner and I began delving into his past. The problem was he wouldn't let me print most of the good stuff. So what you will read is only a small portion of the information I was given -- what's fit to print.

Prior to working at the Fellowship offices, Zerilli was a front desk clerk at Holiday Inn. When the management changed, they directed him to trim back his sideburns. He refused to do this and quit.

Since that time, 5½ years ago, Zerilli said he has seen numerous changes at the Fellowship offices. He says there is a much bigger staff now and there has been a tremendous growth in MCC. "It would be impossible for me to do what I did five years ago," he explained. When Zerilli began he was not only Troy's secretary but also was the switchboard operator, file clerk and in charge of church services. Zerilli added that we still need a larger staff to keep up with our continuing growth.

As executive secretary he works with Rev. Troy Perry and Rev. Nancy Wilson. "It's nice being able to work with people like Nancy Wilson and Troy Perry, who I not only like but also respect. They know what they want and they know what they're doing. It's a pleasure to work with them," Zerilli said.

One of the most difficult parts of his job is handling Rev. Perry's "varied and humungous travel schedule," he said. Zerilli explained that eventually will be necessary for Troy to have someone travel with him so that work can be done on the road. Zerilli would like to be that person. According to him, no one else could possibly read Troy's handwriting!

Working for UFMCC has not been your "normal" every day secretarial job. When Rev. Perry was fasting in front of the Federal building in Los Angeles to raise money to fight the Brigg's initiative, Zerilli

found himself extremely busy. "I'd go down to the Federal building, take dictation, go back to the office and get everything typed and then go back to the Federal building for Troy's signature. I did this several times a day."

During this experience, Zerilli's cousin was visiting and "she spent more time at the Federal building than anywhere else," he said.

Political action has always been an important part of this man's life although he is not as active as he once was. "Working for Troy is a full-time job with political action as part of that." Besides being involved in gay rights, Zerilli is active in the anti-nuclear movement, minority rights and is pro ERA.

In addition he has participated in numerous marches, demonstrations and sit-ins. I wondered if he had ever been arrested. He hasn't, but explained that he has tried to be arrested.

When the LOS ANGELES TIMES wasn't giving gay rights any coverage, a group of people demonstrated on the steps of the TIMES building. There were threats that they would be arrested so the demonstrators called all of the TV and radio stations and newspapers explaining that there was a blind black lesbian with a seeing eye dog also demonstrating and that the LA TIMES said they would all be arrested. Within minutes camera crews and reporters arrived to cover this event. No one was arrested.

Another time Zerilli participated in a sit-in at a TV studio. Channel 13 in Los Angeles had aired a show where anti-gay remarks were made. The demonstrators stayed in the studio for over 26 hours until their demands were met. And, they were.

He has also marched in at least one Christopher Street Parade every year and

he also marched in the March on Washington. Zerilli's parents also supported that march. They were on the parade route sporting their buttons which read, "I'm straight and support gay rights."

He explained that his parents have always been supportive of him and his political activities. "When I came out, I flew out!" Zerilli quipped. He joined the Gay Community Alliance of Long Island and a few months later became their vice-president. "I was living with my parents then and we used their telephone number for the Alliance."

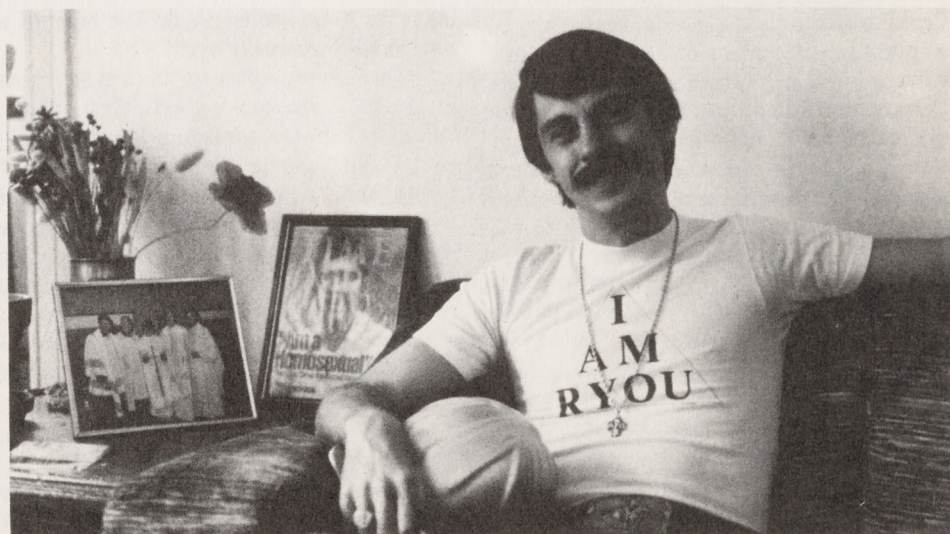
It was during his political involvement that he first met Troy Perry. "I was at a march in Albany, N.Y. and Troy led that march and then spoke at Columbia University. I spoke briefly with Troy then. Before meeting Troy, I had always admired him and his involvement in the gay liberation movement."

Not long after that march, Zerilli moved to Los Angeles and became involved in MCC. "Finding MCC was a real blessing. I had always been religious and had had a hard time rectifying being gay and Christian," Zerilli said.

"I went through counselling and prayed until I was blue in the face. I left the church but the craving was still there." He said that coming to MCC was the best move he has ever made in his life.

Zerilli attended Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute in Teaneck, NJ when he thought he had a calling to be a minister. "I found out there were other callings and I did have a calling from God but it wasn't to preach."

"I am really content with myself. I've never been more comfortable with a job. I'm where God wants me," Zerilli adamantly said.



Frank K. Zerilli

continued from page 6

In the Northeast District and in New York City some of that is already in motion. People in the district have begun to respond to requests for people to work on the task force. MCC New York has been quite gracious in providing meeting space and other aids for organizing a Third World Lesbian and Gay support group, thus, helping facilitate number 5 above. This group, the New York Coalition of Third World Lesbians and Gay men, is in the process of developing a counselling/crisis network for Third World Lesbians and Gay men; programs to meet basic survival need of Third World communities; and a committee to explore being Third World, Gay and Christian. This group has only been meeting since January and has only about 20 active members. It will grow and be a healing source, thanks to MCC New York, and be a bridge between racial communities in New York City. Also, there is a joint program on race relations being planned for April between MCC New York and Dignity New York to collectively work on consciousness raising. Small beginnings, but, still steps toward a solution.

In order that this race relations task force be more than just another resolution passed at General Conference it takes the involvement of each and every congregation in UFMCC. Contact persons are needed throughout this Fellowship. Ideas and opinions are needed from all who care to change. We in UFMCC have had racism task forces before which danced in and out of being active. The newness of this task force is its intention to dance continuously and consistently until the final notes of racial discord have been heard. I, personally, am intensely committed to change. I invite this Fellowship to dance with me. I am certain that with combined energies and creativity, we can become truly a Church for ALL people, building a Kingdom where all are free, all are saved, all are one with God.

If people are interested in working on a race relations task force, please write to me, Renee McCoy, c/o MCC New York, 675 Hudson Street 3N, New York, New York 10014. There are no special skills required for this other than a willingness to see UFMCC reach out to ALL communities, regardless of race. There is something everyone can do.

THE 80's

CAN

BE OURS

FELLOWSHIP FLASHES

REV. ART RAMIREZ from Thames Valley, England to MCC Bournemouth, England . . .

REV. SHELLEY HAMILTON was re-elected as district coordinator of the Northeast District. She was also elected co-chair of the Student Senate at Union Theological Seminary, NY . . . RENEE MCCOY, exhorter at MCC New York was elected assistant district coordinator of the Northeast District . . . EXHORTER BOB GALLOWAY worship coordinator from Detroit, MI to Waterloo, Iowa as worship coordinator . . . REV. DENNIS CHAPPELLE from MCC-Los Angeles to Jacksonville, FL . . . REV. JEFFREY D. PULLING, from Dean of Samaritan Theological Institute to pastor of MCC East Bay in Oakland, CA . . . REV. CATHY ELLIOTT from Des Moines, IA to Little Rock, AR . . . REV. CLAUDIA VIERRA AND REV. BEAU McDANIELS from Oakland and Monterey to Boise, ID . . . REV. ART SKIPPER from Cincinnati, OH, to Dayton, OH . . . REV. DAVID KROMER to Auckland, New Zealand . . . REV. RONALD GEE from San Diego, CA to Las Vegas, NV.

continued from page 7

EDITOR SPEAKS --

speak for themselves. We don't need a tag that says "Lay Page" or "Lay Concerns Page." I do, however, believe it's a fine idea to have a page set aside for the Commission on the Laity to report what has been happening and as accountability to the laity at large.

Gralley also comments that the "Lay Page" should be expanded but when material for this "Page" was submitted it was less than half a page.

As further explanation I would like to explain what happened regarding In Unity absconding material and deleting the tag line. Gralley simply was unaware of the situation which occurred. She says that IN UNITY can not eliminate the lay concerns page at its whim. Although we did not do this, we do have every right to do that if and when we think it is necessary. This is exactly what happened regarding Mr. Kerber's article. Kerber called me and during the course of our conversation he

asked me what had happened to his article on "Ministering to Ministers" since he had sent it quite some time ago. I explained I had no knowledge of his article but it sounded like a dynamite one, which it was. I asked him to please send it again. We ran the article in its entirety and included some art work. Shortly after this page was ready to go to press I visited Detroit and Gralley handed me the material for the "Lay Concerns Page." When I returned to Los Angeles I realized that her material was Kerber's article, only it had been drastically edited to fill the one page allotted for lay concerns. I made an editorial decision to run the article in its entirety and for that I take full responsibility. I strongly believe it is a lay concern whether or not it has that label.

IN UNITY certainly has an interest in the laity and apparently the laity has an interest in IN UNITY as subscriptions have doubled since January.

ATTENTION!!!

Resumes now being accepted for the position of Chair of the church Hymnody Committee.

Send resume to the Board of Elders, UFMCC, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304, Los Angeles, California 90029.

Resume should include educational background, work experience, and involvement with MCC.

CON

24

GOP - Ambassador George Bush, a Republican presidential hopeful, has spoken out against gay rights.

During the Republican Debates in Des Moines, IA, Bush said he did not favor the codification of gay rights in law but that he did not favor harassment of individuals because of their homosexuality.

He continued to explain that he did not want to see society undermined by codifying homosexuality as normal because he cannot accept it as that.

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Republican Senator Paul Laxalt of Nevada has introduced a bill that would make discrimination against gays lawful.

His bill, "Family Protection Act of 1979 (S. 1808) would prohibit federal money being spent on gay legal services or organizations which say that homosexuality is an acceptable alternate life style.

The National Gay Task Force has announced that Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D., MA) has promised to sign an Executive Order banning discrimination against homosexuals in government employment and services if he is elected President.

The Task Force also said that Kennedy pledged to support the plank in the Democratic platform that supports the rights of gay men and lesbians to full participation in the social, economic and political life of the nation.

"We regard this as a significant commitment," Task Force Co-Executive Directors Charles F. Brydon and Lucia Valeska said. "This is the first meaningful commitment to gay rights from the Kennedy campaign. Many gay Democrats will look more favorably on his candidacy as a result."

Brydon and Valeska said Kennedy's commitments were substantially the same as pledges made by California Governor Edmund J. Brown at a gay rights fundraiser in Washington last November.

St. Louis held their celebration of Lesbian and Gay Pride on April 12 - 20. The week focused on social, cultural and political issues. Events included workshops, dances, sports activities, art fair, barbecue, films and culminated in a "Walk for Charity" and rally. The week was sponsored by a local broad based coalition of Lesbians and Gay men. A coupon book for out-of-town guests was offered which included discounts to restaurants, bars, theaters and clubs. Community housing and child care was also provided. St. Louis, traditionally a conservative community, is experiencing an awakening of lesbian and gay activity. Recently, several new groups have formed and joined with existing groups in organizing this week of celebration.

N.O.W., the Board of the National Organization for Women has voted to work against the renomination of President Carter. Their reasons for opposing Carter are because he has not won ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and because abortion rights have been restricted during his presidency.

SWEDEN - Thirty lesbian and gay men from a national group phoned their employers requesting sick leave because they were gay. Homosexuality was listed as an illness and under government policy the sick leave had to be granted. The government has since removed homosexuality as an illness.

MINNEAPOLIS, MN - The police department here has been advertising for jobs in a gay newspaper.

The employment recruiter explained that this was not an effort to recruit gays or to calm any tension between the police department and the gay community. The recruiter said that they simply need clerical help.

INTEGRITY, the international association of gay/lesbian Episcopalians (Anglicans) and their friends, has announced Boston as the site of the 6th annual Integrity Convention. Scheduled for August 21-24, the convention will be centered at Emmanuel Church on Newbury Street in the Back Bay section of Boston, within easy walking distance of subway stations, historical sites, tourist attractions, shops, restaurants, and night spots.

Joan L. Clark and John E. Boswell will be the principal speakers at the convention. Clark, presently residing in Evanston, Illinois, was dismissed last year from her job with the Women's Division of the United Methodist Church's Board of Global Ministries when she revealed to the Women's Division that she was a lesbian. Boswell, assistant professor of history at Yale, is the author of *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* to be published this spring by the University of Chicago Press.

The convention will offer a series of workshops, coordinated by the Rev. Canon Clinton Jones of Hartford, author of *Understanding Gay Relatives and Friends* and *Homosexuality and Counseling*. A number of well known Episcopal priests, both women and men, have been invited to participate in the convention's liturgies.

Los Angeles Congressperson Anthony C. Beilenson (D. Los Angeles, San Fernando Valley) recently introduced legislation amending the Immigration and Nationality Act to end the discriminatory exclusion of aliens solely on the basis of their sexual preference.

"Existing law requires the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to refuse the issuance of visas to homosexuals, whether they are seeking eventual U.S. citizenship or simply planning a vacation in this country, and to deport aliens living in or visiting the United States. This is done under the provisions of a 1952 law which equates homosexuality with a psychopathic personality or sexual deviation," Beilenson said.

"Sexual preference is a false and arbitrary basis on which to exclude human beings from admission into this country and, of course, virtually nobody equates homosexuality with a psychopathic personality or mental defect anymore," Beilenson stressed.

In August of 1979, the Surgeon General of the United States determined that the medical and scientific community no longer considers homosexuality a mental disorder. However, the Justice Department recently ruled that the INS must continue to refuse issuance of visas to homosexuals since that agency is statutorily mandated to do so by the Immigration and Nationality Act.

"Because of the Justice Department's action, Congress must now act to abolish this discriminatory law. It is time to revise our outdated immigration laws and concentrate our limited resources on issues that really matter to us. The Immigration and Naturalization Service is so over-worked and understaffed that we cannot justify our present policy of requiring the agency to spend its time and resources on the ferreting out of possible homosexuals," Beilenson stated.

"As a fair and just people, we cannot afford to categorize human beings and deny them basic rights and privileges. A person's sexual orientation, so long as it is expressed in private between consenting adults, should not be used to deny that person entry into the United States," the Congressman continued.

"This bill is a matter of fundamental fairness, and I hope it will receive serious consideration during this legislative session. The present law is one which Congress would never pass now and which has no place in our immigration statutes in 1980. As a practical matter, it is impossible to enforce with any consistency; it is outmoded, discriminatory, and arbitrary, and

should be repealed," Beilenson concluded.

Beilenson was joined in introducing this bill by Representatives Julian Dixon and Henry Waxman, also of California.

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Recent fundamentalist efforts to organize political support for right-wing causes have been criticized by the nation's chief Lutheran lobbyist.

"When the Self-Righteous Rule, Watch Out!" was the title of an article in Focus, the monthly newsletter of the Lutheran Council's Office for Governmental Affairs. In it, the Rev. Charles V. Bergstrom, executive director, assailed those who "claim to present God's will and the moral answer to legislative decisions."

He mentioned Christian Cause, Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, and The Religious Roundtable, which says it "fights for pro-God, pro-family and pro-America causes." These groups oppose abortion, the ERA and gay rights laws, as well as SALT II, the school prayer ban and welfare laws.

Pastor Bergstrom decried the "arrogance" of assuming that there is only one proper position for Christians to take in such controversies, as well as the concept of "a 'religious' hit-list of candidates who do not vote 'right' on a few issues and therefore are not 'moral'."

He said that, while he and other denominational lobbyists in Washington are willing to work with these groups for social and economic justice, he cautioned that fundamentalist lobbying for "a 'moral majority' is different from the work of advocacy on behalf of the oppressed."

In Congress, Pastor Bergstrom represents the positions of the major Lutheran churches regarding legislation. Only one -- the 3 million-member Lutheran Church in America -- officially supports gay-rights laws; so far, the other Lutheran churches have taken no position.

LOS ANGELES -- Lutherans Concerned will observe its sixth anniversary by holding the second national meeting of its members on June 19-22 at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in San Francisco.

Lutherans Concerned is the organization of gay and non-gay women and men seeking gay understanding in the Lutheran churches.

Information about the group and Assembly '80 is available by writing Lutherans Concerned, Box 19114A, Los Angeles, CA 90019.

CONSCIOUSNESS RAZORS

3/4 OF THE 1970 DRUG
RELATED DEATHS WERE
PUERTO RICAN OR BLACK.
HALF OF THE VICTIMS WERE
LESS THAN 23 YEARS OLD
AND 5 WERE LESS THAN 14
YEARS OLD.

MEXICAN AMERICANS
CONSTITUTE OVER 20% OF
WAR CASUALTIES FROM
THE 5 SOUTHWESTERN
STATES, EVEN THOUGH
THEY ARE LESS THAN 10%
OF THE POPULATION OF
THESE STATES.

IN 1970 45% OF ALL LESS
THAN HONORABLE
DISCHARGES WENT TO
BLACKS

AT LEAST 15 MILLION SLAVES
LANDED IN AMERICA ALIVE.
YET, THE 1970 CENSUS STATES
THE PRESENT BLACK
POPULATION TO BE ABOUT
22,580,000. SOMETHING
WENT WRONG.

65% OF ALL RURAL DEEP
SOUTH BLACK FAMILIES
LIVE ON LESS THAN
\$2,400/YEAR.

THE CHANCES OF A WHITE
TEENAGE GIRL BEING
MURDERED IS 1 IN 100,000.
FOR BLACK TEENAGE BOYS
IT IS 200 IN 100,000. THE
NATIONAL AVERAGE IS 30
IN 100,000.

*a message from your Fellowship
Committee on Racism*

Five years in MCC — a personal testimony

By Bruce Gerig
Clerk, Alpha & Omega

My heart overflows today with joy and praise to our Mighty God who has raised up UFMCC to proclaim God's love and call to redemption to all people, including gays and lesbians, and to our precious Jesus who now fills us through the Holy Spirit so that our cup runneth over!

I am now celebrating five years of having been with MCC, and I want to send this letter of thanks and testimony of the miracles that God has wrought in my heart and life through the ministry of this Fellowship. Five years ago I can remember coming into an MCC New York service; and even though the congregation was between pastors and exhorters were carrying on the preaching (praise the Lord for our exhorters!), as I sat there and heard that God *did not* hate me because I was gay, my heart was "strangely warmed" (as John Wesley once wrote) and I felt the Holy Spirit move mightily through my being.

And, although it did not happen over night, as I began regularly attending the discussion group meetings and the worship services, all of the guilt that had built up in me through the years, the fear that God's wrath was poured out upon me and that I was living in sin, and all the confusion, hopelessness, and spiritual aloneness that I felt inside of me began to peel away. I found the Holy Spirit once again alive, flooding my being, and working with me.

I turned then from my agnosticism (to which I had been forced to turn because I felt I could not live with what my church taught about homosexuality) to begin rereading the Scriptures; and I began attending a Bible study class. I was in for a shock, however, because I was told that all I had learned in my four years of Bible College was now out-of-date. There was a whole new approach to Biblical interpretation. So I began reading everything I could get my hands on. A friend of mine at Union Theological Seminary gave me a reading list; and I devoured Anderson's *Understanding the Old Testament*, Key's *Understanding the New Testament*, Wright's *The book of the Acts of God*, Hayes' *Introduction to the Bible*, and books by Albright, Von Rad, Bright, and Cross. I

even signed up for Biblical course work at Columbia University under the famous mythologist, Prof. Theodor Gaster.

What I "learned" was that most of what the writers of the Bible had written about the authorship of the various books, that what Jesus had said about the divine source and nature of Scripture, and that the old method of primarily taking Scripture at face value under the guidance of the Holy Spirit was now old hat, "unscholarly," and certainly not as trustworthy as what modern Biblical scholars were theorizing - many, who discounting any supernatural, divine, and miraculous content to the Bible, assumed that they could explain Scripture by using purely secular, scholarly tools.

Professor Gaster, for example, showed us how all of the passages of Scripture could be dated after the occurrences of the so-called "prophecies" that they contained, how the Old Testament god, a kind of early "Uncle Sam" had sprung up out of the Israelites' need for a higher power in the universe to explain the unexplainable, and how easily basic terms of the Bible could be redefined to fit into this naturalistic system of interpretation, e.g. "In prayer, one examines oneself and one confesses one's mistakes; and in the process, one is rejuvenated - and our power to do this is called 'forgiveness'" (Lecture of July 28, 1976).

I began to pray to the Lord, saying, "Dearest Jesus, is this the way Your Word is to be interpreted? How am I to know whether presumed author J. E. P. or D wrote this or that Old Testament passage? And these modern theologians differ so much, one from another - who am I to believe has figured it all out?"

Then the Holy Spirit led me to discover two illuminating books, which put my feet again on the right path: *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* and *More Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, by Josh McDowell. Every Christian who wants to understand both sides of the modern Biblical scholarship crisis should run out and buy these two books and read them. The Holy Spirit began to show me that many, many Biblical scholars and theologians today have turned away from the truth (of. 2 Timothy 4:2-4) in their ac-

cepting of the premises (1) that there is no supernatural in the Bible, (2) that Scripture is just a naturalistic evolution of humankind's making up of the Hebrew religion and of the Christian faith, (3) that all of the familiar terms of Scripture should be redefined in humanistic terms, and (4) that Jesus was just a good man who lived and died and whose memory lives on today as "the Christ."

The Holy Spirit said, "You just continue to read and study my Word. It is written so that under My guidance even the most simple believer can understand its basic truths. You need to read modern criticism very carefully, critically, and in many cases with a grain of salt."

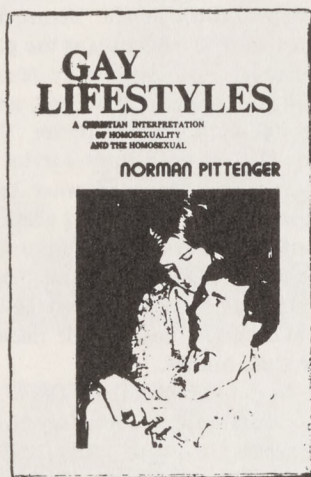
Then it was that Alpha and Omega started, first as a little prayer group meeting in people's homes, in the summer of 1976. The next year the group joined with MCC Brooklyn and began worshipping in the First Unitarian Church in Brooklyn Heights. Right in the first service I attended, I was captured by the lively, joyful singing; by the emphasis placed on having a real, personal, and dedicated experience with our Lord Jesus; and by the old-fashioned preaching based on the Word of God and emphasizing God's power to bring a new birth to any opened heart and to come and dwell in that heart with the transforming, sanctifying, and illuminating power of the Holy Spirit.

This is not to say that Alpha and Omega MCC has not had its hard places. Particularly last year we struggled through difficult weeks after our dear Founder and First Pastor, Rev. Dee Jackson, resigned and we had to begin searching for a new Pastor. How we praise God now for Rev. Lee Carlton, a minister mighty in the Scriptures and in the Spirit, whom God has called into our midst as our new Pastor and through whom we are trusting God to do a great work so that there is an expanding witness of the Gospel, an uplifting of Christ, and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in this city on which the enemy has had such a stronghold for so long.

Praise God's Holy Name for the good news that MCC proclaims and for the Holy Spirit who continues working mightily even now to spread this message around the world!

CLOSE OUT SALE! CLOSE OUT SALE! CLOSE OUT SALE! CLOSE OUT SALE! CLOSE OUT SALE! CLOSE OUT SALE!

CLOSE OUT SALE!



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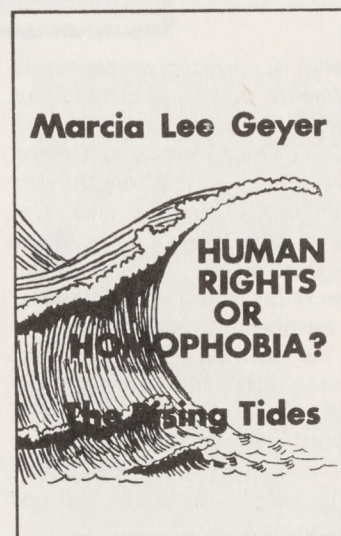
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DISTRICT CONFERENCE



The District of Australia conducted its District Conference over the Australia Day long week-end in January. It was held at "Clevdon", the Uniting Church conference centre, located some 20 miles from the city of Melbourne in the pleasant bush surroundings of an area known as the Basin near Mount Dandenong. Attending the conference were lay and clergy delegates, as well as members, from each of the churches in the District - Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney. New Zealand, which was a part of the District of Australasia until recently, now a primary target area for World Church Extension, was also represented. In all 57 persons were in attendance.

Also present at the conference was the Rev. Jeri Ann Harvey who is liaison Elder to the District of Australia. Her presence at the conference contributed greatly to the atmosphere of warmth and love, and did much to stimulate the enthusiasm of those present. While in Australia Rev. Harvey visited all the MCC Churches in the District and won the hearts of all those she met.

The conference commenced on the Friday evening with the welcome and opening worship service, followed by a time of fellowship. From the very onset it was apparent that the weekend was going to be one of caring and sharing. On Saturday morning following worship several workshops were conducted. They were: The Christian in Society, Prayer, The Transsexual in Australia, and Our District. The business meeting was held on Saturday afternoon and from that Rev. Jan Weymouth, Assistant Pastor of MCC Melbourne was re-elected District Coordinator, and Rev. Karen Linstrom, Pastor of MCC Melbourne was elected Assistant District Coordinator. The meeting also

resolved that District Conference for 1981 would be held on the Australia Day long weekend in Canberra, the Federal Capital, thus facilitating a more central location for the majority of those travelling to conference, considering the vast area of the District. On Saturday evening an informal question time with Rev. Harvey was conducted. During this time Rev. Harvey provided information on the latest developments in, and planned extension areas of the UFMCC.

Sunday saw the division of the clergy and laity into Clergy Day and Lay Day. The purpose of this division was not to create any real segregation between the two groups, but conversely to provide an awareness of the need for clergy and laity to work closely together, and to be able to discuss this in their own respective groups and to pool the resources tapped at a later time. As a central theme for the laity at the conference was "Let's minister to our ministers," Worship, Visitation/Outreach, Publications, Social Activities, and Alternative Worship Styles. These workshops proved to be most stimulating and a beneficial learning experience. The clergy at this time conducted a workshop entitled Dealing with Depression.

The Sunday worship service was conducted in the evening. This service took the place of the normal Sunday service held by MCC Melbourne, and regular attenders of MCC Melbourne who were unable to be present at the conference made their way to the conference centre for worship. The service, which included the installing of Rev. Jan Weymouth as District Coordinator, proved to be the climax of the conference. The service was claimed by many to have been the most stimulating and spiritually uplifting experience of their lives. This was in

part, no doubt, due to the dynamic preaching of Rev. Harvey who delivered a most thought-provoking sermon based upon the scripture passage of Peter walking on the water to Jesus. In essence she spoke of the faith required when faced by the seemingly overwhelming stormy waves we encounter as we progress through life. So moving was the service, and so evident was the presence of the Holy Spirit that at its conclusion many did not wish to leave and remained to sing songs and hymns of praise.

Following a communion service on the Monday morning the conference began to wind down with reports being given on the results of the workshops conducted the previous day. By lunch time the conference evaluation session had been conducted and people began their farewells to leave for their homes.

Yet they took with them the results of District Conference 1980; for out of it came a greater sense of unity, fellowship and enthusiasm. Over those three days most of those who had attended were touched and moved by the undeniable presence of the Holy Spirit. They left that place happier people having a greater awareness of their position in relation to God, their Church, other people and themselves. Furthermore, they were eager to return to their respective congregations and share with those unable to be present the joy they had experienced and the knowledge that the UFMCC is on the move and WILL expand in Australia. The overall atmosphere of that conference is well described in the words to the theme song for Conference '80:

*Grace is flowing like a river,
Flowing out to you and me;
Flowing out into the desert,
Setting all the captives free.*

*Let it flow through me,
Let it flow through me;
Let the mighty love of God
Flow out through me.*

see pictures
pages
17 & 18



TOP: Rev. Renee Hein (center), with the clerk and treasurer from the Adelaide church. TOP LEFT: A wine and cheese tasting party was held in Perth during Rev. Elder Jeri Ann Harvey's visit. ABOVE: Community prayer was an important aspect of the District Conference in Melbourne. ABOVE RIGHT: Ralph and Arthur, who have been together for 32 years, enjoy some quiet time together at the conference. RIGHT: Ivor Holmans, worship coordinator of Brisbane (center) is pictured with the Board of Directors.





TOP: Rev. Jeri Ann Harvey cuddles a Koala Bear and finds out how friendly these animals really are. TOP RIGHT: Rev. Jan Weymouth (left) was re-elected

District Coordinator of Australia and Rev. Karen Lindstrom was elected Assistant District Coordinator. ABOVE: A business Meeting during the District Conference held in Melbourne.

continued from page 9

In conclusion, then, perhaps we should all take a deeper look into our Christian Ministry and all it entails; perhaps we are not exercising our full potential as Christians. The gifts (Charismata) given to Christians are listed in 1 Cor. 12:18-20 and maybe we in this Fellowship have been needlessly 'starving' our Congregations (and ourselves) by being a little timid in this aspect of Ministry. Sometimes one has to really step out in Faith - not just in starting a group or finding new facilities, etc., but in our spiritual lives as well.

If God has been pleased to place these gifts at our disposal, how can we, as Christian believers in all good conscience reject them or brush them aside? We don't need signs and wonders to uphold our faith, but, I maintain that these gifts were given to us not for their spectacular value, but simply because Jesus Christ loves us and wants us to be truly made whole on all levels of our existence.

As believers we have access to God's limitless power and grace - all freely given; perhaps in our original denomination these things were never talked about or were even rejected, but, we are no longer in 'Egypt' but in this wonderful Universal Fellowship that God has raised up for us who were rejected. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, including Healing, are just another example of God's blessings and love being showered upon us who truly believe, and, even more wonderful, those who do not believe are being equally blessed and healed.

Jesus' entire public Ministry was connected with healing the sick as well as teaching His followers. Therefore, logically shouldn't we who are the inheritors of the Gospel be following the example of our Redeemer? Why should we be so on fire with teaching and preaching, yet so lukewarm in healing God's people who are sick? Pray for guidance and, taking your faith in both hands, lay them upon the sick that they may be healed through Jesus Christ's powerful love. Experience has shown that God is willing to use even the most imperfect among us to alleviate suffering on all levels of the human personality. God has called us, the message is clear, shall we answer joyfully or remain silent in the face of needless suffering? How wonderful if we could say with Christ, "Go back and tell . . . what you hear and see; the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor." (Matthew 11:5).

continued from page 5

Dear Editor,

Have you ever personally seen a woman just after she has been beaten by her husband? Have you seen the bruises on her face and arms, the cut lip, the furtive eyes? Have you ever sat in a strange apartment and heard a man pounding on the next door, screaming to let him in, as the woman hovers in a corner behind the locked door? Have you heard that same woman vomit all day long, her heaves reaching through the thin walls? Have you ever loved -- been in love -- with a woman who has been ritually battered by a man? Have you read *The Woman's Room* by Marilyn French and said to yourself, "I know those women." Have you lived someplace where the policemen have a rape club, their latest victim a young innocent woman pulled off the street, thrown into jail, and raped 18 times, rupturing her insides until she died? Have you ever had to call the police because a good friend arrives at your door crying, having just escaped from a rapist, and then sit through the ensuing interrogation? Have you ever had someone try to rape you with deliberate cold-blooded calmness? Have you felt that muscular body come down on yours? Have you had a close friend tell you how her father regularly molested her while growing up, and awhile later another friend tells you the same thing, and another, and another?

I can say yes to each of these experiences and many more. Most women have worse stories to tell. I've heard a lot of them. I'm told that I have "raw feelings." Maybe you can understand why I have such feelings. Sometimes I feel so deeply that I want to run into a hole, build a little campfire, and hide, never to return to the world. Most of the time I just cry. You see, inclusive language and feminism aren't just ideas in my head. They're a lot of deep feelings. So, when I hear rumors about a new hymnbook being considered for official sanction by UFMCC or when I hear of major churches sanctioning the use of a new hymnbook like *Hymns for the Family of God*, I cry.

Yes, this hymnbook regularly uses sexist language of the worst kind, but that's only one problem. It uses contemporary songs, but not inclusive theology. And in our small world, it is nationalistic (U.S.A.). Moreover, it is made very clear in the hymnal that "family" refers to "nuclear family," a concept used by the new Christian right movement to destroy the homosexual lifestyle. Let me quote from the hymnal:

She (a woman) gets up before dawn to prepare breakfast for her household, and plans the day's work for her servant girls.

Her husband is well known, for he sits in the council chamber with the other civic leaders. (Hymns for the Family of God, Hymn No. 531, "Womanhood," Paragon Associates, Inc., 1976, Nashville, TN).

Of great concern is that we of UFMCC are called out to be a church under God in the name of Jesus Christ bringing good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives and new sight to the blind, setting the downtrodden free (Luke 4:18), but we dare to throw aside this commission because it is too expensive, too much work, and takes too long. We continue to let our women and gay brothers and sisters remain captive, and we put off the healing of women's lives. And can all this simply be put off onto the Hymnody Committee? Each of us needs to take the responsibility. We must take the time. We must make the effort.

Yes, I feel strongly about this matter. I have to live with myself, day in and night out, as I walk the streets and feel the women who pass through my guts.

Rhea Miller

Editor's Note: At present, the Board of Elders is searching for a new chair for the Committee on Church Hymnody. No official action has been taken or even been discussed by the Board of Elders concerning endorsing any hymnal. The task definition of the committee continues to be to develop our own inclusive hymnal.

The final edition will have to await the results of the Task Force on Inclusive Language's report to the 1981 General Conference.

Dear Editor,

I would like to thank you for printing Susan Eenigenburg's letter from MCC, New York. We must acknowledge the breadth of our fellowship, and I believe this whole controversy has demonstrated the profound theological variety that exists within UFMCC. But for some, as Susan states, "how threatening it is to embrace God's freedom as a gift."

Mahalo, and God bless you and the staff of In Unity.

Aloha Ke Akua!

The Rev. Denis E. Moore, Pastor

What does it mean?

By Susan Moyes

What does it mean, as a lesbian, as a member of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC), to be the church? Why do lesbian and gay Christians leave the churches they grew up in, mainstream churches, to join MCC? Whatever the reasons for choosing MCC, has it worked for us, being a gay church?

These are questions posed to me by the editors of *Insight*. They are difficult questions, ones that pass through my head from time to time, ones that I've talked about with lesbian and gay friends. There are no answers but many responses, and I think that it is important that we continue to pass them around, rephrasing them to each other, as we make decisions about our lives.

I would like to begin by juxtaposing two thoughts. One is that we, as a people categorized by our sexual orientation, are perhaps the one group of people excluded by the churches for being who we are. Though they keep separating who we are

from what we do, the exclusion is most accurately directed at who we are. The second thought is that the largest gay organization in the United States is a Christian church. Irony. The irony is important.

As I understand it, being lesbian/gay and being Christian are things that in some deep sense we do not choose. For me, being lesbian is a process of becoming conscious of and claiming the deepest, most powerful parts of my self. In retrospect, I was engaged in this process all my life; at the age of 22, I saw it for the first time. Similarly, being Christian is a process, a matter of absorbing the dominant culture we grow up in, the teachings of family; it is a process that for most of us at some point involves a coming to consciousness. In becoming conscious, we can see critically, perhaps assessing positive and negative effects of the beliefs, values, morality that went so long unquestioned. And at that point we can choose. But in some sense religion, like sexual orientation, is not chosen. The symbols have power

and meaning, the values and morality have affected us in ways that we cannot easily leave behind, and being Christian is part of the fabric of our being whether or not we choose it.

As with other elements of ourselves, being lesbian/gay and Christian might be part of the background, taken for granted, integrated. Except that they are constantly brought into the foreground, most often as mutually exclusive categories. You cannot be lesbian/gay and Christian, we are told. One or the other must go or change. The denominations that do not reject us outright are busy doing studies on the issue of homosexuality, the end result usually being that while God loves us, our practices are not acceptable in God's sight, our relationships cannot be blessed, and no, practicing homosexuals may not be candidates for the ordained ministry. Once again, our sexuality is isolated as a thing in itself, genitally located, in the foreground. In view of these attitudes in the churches, most lesbians and gay men have rejected the church and see any church affiliation as masochistic, ridiculous.

Indeed, ridiculous. The church, in many ways, is the greatest perpetrator of our oppression. But I want at this point to return to the two thoughts I began with. That the churches have excluded us categorically on the basis of our sexuality, and that the largest gay organization in the United States is a Christian church, MCC. I believe that in this irony lies great power.

In the past several years, we have seen the issues of women's ordination and ordination of homosexuals wreaking havoc in mainline denominations. The underlying issue remains sexuality. The churches' rejection/exclusion of us is a manifestation of the ongoing attempt, albeit futile, to exclude sexuality from the church. It is impossible to see lesbians/gay men as asexual people, hence we are a threat. As long as they are studying ours, they don't have to deal with their own. As long as they can repeat to women the empty argument that Jesus the Savior was male, therefore clergy must be male, they don't have to deal with the fundamental threat that women present to the church. The women's issue came first. Then an out lesbian was ordained by the Episcopal Church, and the repressive, processive mechanisms went into high gear, the situation was becoming serious.

The symbol system and power struc-
continued on page 21

Swooning in the majesty of God

By Ken Collins

Even though I was only in junior high school at the time, I remember the 1964 presidential election campaign very well because Lyndon Johnson came to my home town of Orlando, Florida to campaign for election to the office he had inherited when Kennedy was assassinated. There was no school that day, and we all gathered eagerly along Colonial Drive to catch a glimpse of LBJ as he sailed by in his heavily guarded limousine. The limousine deposited him in the parking lot of the Colonial Plaza Shopping Center, where he spoke in vain to a crowd that was later to vote for Goldwater. For the crowd had assembled not to see the man Johnson, but the office he represented.

After Johnson spoke, he engaged in his campaign trademark: he plunged into the crowd (to the horror of the Secret Service) and shook hands with as many people as he could. The effect on the crowd was amazing -- astonished men stared at their right hands with wide eyes and exclaimed: "He actually shook this hand!" And women, lapsing into an old stereotype, fainted dead away and were carried off on stretchers.

Why were the men stunned? And why did the women faint? Because the majesty

of the office of the President of the United States, embodied in the person of man who had succeeded a slain president, who spoke with foreign potentates, and who sat with one finger crooked over the button that could destroy the world -- all this majesty and power and glory -- came and shook mere mortal hands with Mr. and Mrs. Unliberated Central Floridian. It was too much to bear!

If we are so stunned and shocked by the *symbolic* majesty of one of our own number, how much more would we stagger before the *real* majesty of God? God's majesty is not conferred by majority vote; it derives from God's own infinite and innate superiority over us. We are but God's finite creatures, infinitesimally small, eking out our microscopic lives on a vanishingly tiny dust mote in an obscure corner of an easily misplaced galaxy in an unimaginably immense universe which exists at the pleasure of God's grace and power! If God in God's full majesty came to the Colonial Plaza Shopping Center parking lot and were to jump into the crowd and shake our hands, fainting would not be an adequate response at all! We would dissipate in God's majesty as a mist in the morning sun!

continued from page 20

ture of the Christian church is based on a hierarchy of male domination. Ordination of women is difficult enough for it to cope with, but the ordination of a lesbian is the ultimate threat. It is clear from the way the two issues emerged and are dealt with that the two oppressions are linked, that misogyny and homophobia are inseparable. What is crippling the churches is fear of sexuality. So where does this put MCC? Back to the questions: Why do we leave mainline churches, join MCC, has it worked?

It is more accurate, I think, to say that most lesbian/gay Christians do not leave mainline churches to join MCC. I do not see MCC functioning as an alternative church. Rather, the people who come to MCC have either been long out of the church, having given up on it as allowing no place for them, and come to MCC by chance and stay. Or, we are people who never were in the church, for whom MCC is the first experience of real church.

However we arrive at MCC, what we find is a Christian church that integrates sexuality along with everything else. We are sexual beings and we bring our whole selves to worship. We are commonly known as the gay church. I have heard it

said in church that we are not just gay, we are incredibly gay. There is great power, not to mention glee, in being able to embody and thereby shatter the contradictions that have been imposed on us. We can negate the negations, reverse the exclusions. Potentially, MCC is a church whose symbol system and political structure have no stake in the hierarchical power structure of male domination, of male dominance and female submission. (MCC has hardly begun and in some cases has thwarted the task of envisaging this potential. The potential is that spark in our humanity/divinity identical with that spark preached by Jesus, witnessed to by Mary Magdalene, and betrayed so often.)

I will say that it works insofar as we in MCC can realize the freedom to celebrate the gift of our lives, (of life itself, the earth). Our survival/celebration depends on removing the sexism, re-imaging God, dealing with racism, not repeating the sins of the Fathers. This is a heavy charge. It is sometimes easier for oppressed peoples to continue perpetuating the patterns of oppression; the worst enemy is the one inside, that we have internalized. But, as I see it, we have a fine start: We can say who we are.

(Reprinted: INSIGHT - Spring '79)



One of our newer MCC groups in Nigeria, MCC Okigwe at Sunday Worship. We now have seven MCC's in Nigeria. Rev's. Elders Jean White and Charlie Arehart will be visiting the Nigerian churches this fall.

thoughts

Why does the legacy of bitterness remain?
Why do things in life seem awkward to place or fit?
Why can't life go smoothly by without a stir?
How can we ward off tempest storms from swelling up so hard and fast?

Why dear God, did you make me gay?
Why do most of the infinite designs in Thy creation parade so proudly,
But Thy handiwork in me is anathema
Even to those who profess Thy will?

Maybe that is why
You made blacks
and orientals
and whites
and polynesians:
That we would learn in time
to put human beliefs aside
To see Thee as Thou art.

Finding glory in diversity --
we understand the reflections of Thy creation.
Such is learning to know Thee --
the infinite Creator
which Thou art.

So each of us has our own work to do:
to love and understand,
To see one another
as part of Thy handiwork --
Each one a mirror
of Thy infinite design.

By Bruce Stores
MCC Seattle

new churches

MCC Galveston, TX

MCC of the Sioux Empire
Sioux Falls, SD

MCC Copenhagen, Denmark

MCC Puerto Rico

MCC Las Vegas, NV

MCC Santa Cruz,
Tucson, AR (Hispanic)

I want to write a little bit about love.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has given love to each and everyone of us. This love is offered to us freely and without prior conditions. As we open our hearts and minds we know God indeed loves us just as we are, and we accept that love and raise our arms and hearts and shout, "Amen, Hallelujah!"

Suddenly, the burdens we have carried for so long fall aside. Suddenly we are as light as a bird. We fly over the rainbow. We see clearly, perhaps for the very first time in our whole lives. All that has passed before really does not matter at all. We are born again, raised from the dead. We are children of God!

Each of us have a valid testimony to witness to of all the personal hells we have emerged from. Straight or gay, female or male, black or white or red or green, we have all shared in being victimized by an out-dated religious and social structure predicated upon God the distant judge and the powers of Satan over our bodies, desires, and emotions. That is, we are victims until we enter the doors of Metropolitan Community Church for the first time.

"One thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see."

The first time I attended a service of Metropolitan Community Church it was at the personal invitation of the new Pastor at Washington, D.C., Mr. Jack Isbell. I had been leading a workshop on leather relationships at a national GAA conference, and Jack requested me to represent the Washington leather community at his installation service. So, in I clomped, chaps, motorcycle jacket, hat, boots, chains, handkerchief, gun, whips, chairs, the works. A friendly handshake greeted me and no one raised as much as an eyebrow. I felt hot and uncomfortable (who wouldn't?). I wanted to get up and zoom away on my bike parked in front of the church, but I stayed glued to that pew.

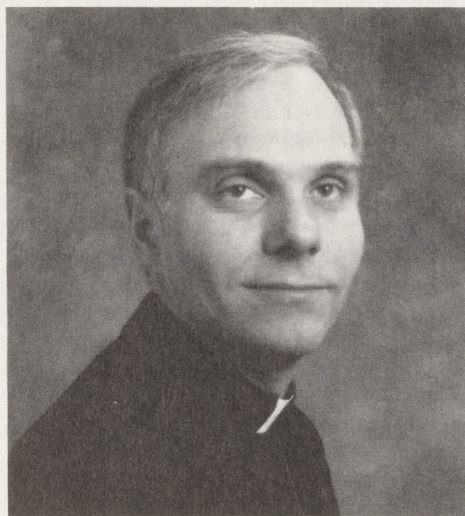
Jack issued the challenge, "If you love the Lord, say Amen", and people were waving their arms in the air and stomping their feet in a boisterous "Amen!"

Really! Maybe them! Maybe in this church! But definitely never me! We just didn't do that back in Western Pennsylvania!

Wednesday night arrived, the biggest bar night for motorcycle clubs in the DC area. My club, the Druids, was acting as host at our local bar, The Eagle. I reasoned, go to the prayer meeting first, and I still had plenty of time for the bar after. So off I went to church being led hand in hand by Ben Abell. Would you believe

clergy CORNER

By Rev. David Kromer
MCC Auckland, New Zealand



Wednesday night made Sunday afternoon seem quiet? They sang Beulah Land and clapped their hands and prayed and made testimonials! I never had before, but I did that night. After the service we sat over coffee for many hours and for the first time in fifteen years I talked about God in a really positive way.

The rest is history. For the first time I found a God of love. I had studied for the ministry many years before and had found only a stern and judgemental father figure who had no room for me. Now I wrapped God around me and felt warm and snugly all over.

The transformation did not happen over night as those who suffered through those early days of liberation can well attest. Fortunately, I was surrounded by many who cared. Siby and Jennie, bless them, patiently led me to realize by their love and example that women are equal workers in God's kingdom. They also began me on the path of inclusive language in a very positive manner. Kerry was the religious leader who led me on a new spiritual path to know a loving Parent. Ben urged me at first to go to services, and sat beside me and guided me at those early services until I, too, learned the words to

Beulah Land. Roy sponsored me for membership and stood up for me on that great day.

Then one Sunday we were singing, "When we've been there ten thousand years" my arms raised up to God as a sign of praise and total commitment. I was a phoenix, rising out of my own ashes.

The way has not always been easy since that memorable day, but never have I brought those arms back down. How could I? God loves me! What else really matters!

In the five years since I joined UFMCC my church and I have changed quite a bit.

When I first joined MCC it was not at all unusual to hear "I'm a Baptist" or "I'm an Episcopalian", and not just by the laity! This carry over was not just vocal, but also manifested itself in attitude, approach, and how we tried to pattern our structures, government and standards. We tried many times to duplicate what we had just escaped from because that was somehow more comfortable than to try to figure out a new way of approaching the love offered to us by God. Many times we were less than tolerant of a new idea, or a new person who really felt the love of God in their heart, and wanted to let that love out. In doing so, we sometimes tore down what God had created, and sometimes in the process lost many good people who had much to contribute. Now we seem to be emerging from that cloud of confusion and sometimes misdirection as we finally emerge as our own group. God has called us to be a very special new people to do a very special task which is long overdue. Old wine skins just won't do.

Five years ago we hoped that the main line denominations from which we had all come would soon listen to the loving words of God and work it all out, and that all the children of God would soon be accepted and reunited. That is what we hoped. Every day that promise seems even more distant. Sisters and brothers, we are it.

The eighties are upon us, and what could be a more appropriate commitment than to spread the love of God to all people by way of World Church Extension.

God has given to us, singularly and collectively, so much. Our salvation is more precious than any bar of gold or precious jewel. The wonders of God in our lives cannot be dreamed of. It is only natural that we should want to reach out and to share that love with all those who have not heard.

So you are born again! Good!!

Then what? Will you keep your light under a bushel, or will you allow it to guide others? continued on page 23

continued from page 22

I personally can witness to the love of one of my sisters who knew that we needed stationery in New Zealand to help with church extension, and she personally baked and collected chocolate chip cookies and sold them to her friends. She also sold them to "street people" who have now helped in outreach. Every letter that will go out will be a testimony to her love of Jesus Christ.

Sisters and brothers, if not you, who? If not now, when?

In 1976 God brought Rev. Stan Harris and me together. We fell madly and passionately in love, were joined in Holy Union in September, 1977, and have been honeymooners ever since. We share our love of God and have dedicated our lives and ministries to proclaiming what God has done for us.

We are both involved with spreading the word of God's liberation to New Zealand. As a firm believer in the priesthood of all believers, I look to each and everyone of you to help carry on this work and fill the ranks in years to come as our ministry expands and grows.

Will God's words of love end at our ears only?

"I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth."

Bridge The Gap

Many people have told us that there are Communications Gaps in our Fellowship. If you'd like to help bridge the gap and receive mailings directly from UFMCC (e.g. "Keeping In Touch") just send your name and address to:

"MAILING LIST"

UFMCC

5300 Santa Monica Boulevard

No. 304

Los Angeles, CA 90029

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

ZIP: _____

Letters

Dear Editor,

I don't believe that Rev. Perry intended to make a *double entendre* when he referred to the Coors truck as a "token of friendship" (In Unity, December 1979), but the word "token" certainly has a dual application.

The Coors organization had been the target of boycotts by labor, blacks, Hispanics, and women for several years before the gay community decided to jump on the bandwagon. Coors has not given any "tokens of friendship" to any of the other groups.

Understanding the reason for this requires a longer experience in activism against oppression than most white gay men have. In this day and age, everybody knows that discrimination just doesn't look good. So big businesses, like the Coors company, know they have to show some kind of good will toward minorities. They also know that the very existence of big business as we know it depends upon the maintenance of the class status-quo. They can't go around befriending people who are probably going to upset things.

Then a nice middle-class looking white man in a nice business suit comes along asking for gay rights. What an opportunity! Here is a minority that appears to have a basic interest in maintaining the status-quo, too. Here's a minority that "takes the worry out of being close."

Putting it in terms of the black experience of (Praise the Lord!) long ago: You have a good, benevolent Massa. Massa helps his niggers in every way he can. Massa brings you little gifts and anybody that bothers you will have Massa to deal with. You're Massa's nigger!

I offer here the hard lesson my ancestors had to learn in the hard language in which it was learned: As long as you accept Massa's "tokens of friendship," you gonna stay Massa's nigger!

We're talking about power relationships here. It's a more important question than whether someone sees a UFMCC truck that says, "From Massa with love," on it. I have heard rumors that there are plans to sell the truck and purchase something else. This, I believe, would only serve to disguise the problem, not remedy it.

This is the real world and in the real world "tokens of friendship" don't make

Massas and niggers peers. "Tokens of friendship" buy Massas good, reliable, useful niggers.

Let us remember that none of us are free until all of us are free.

Boycott Coors!

Yours in Christ,
Lucia A. Chappelle

Dear Editor:

For several years I sat in small churches in small towns (and large) waiting for my copy of In Unity to arrive. Information about the other churches, some good pictures, some humor, some sobering thought provoking articles were going to take up a good part of my day because I read every line. Slowly that changed and then it became something that I could no longer sell in my bookstores because no one wanted it. This is not meant to knock the previous editor who obviously had a different idea of what the Fellowship needed to hear than my own. I knew that I no longer looked forward to it and I knew I couldn't sell it so I had to call the offices and cancel our large subscription for it. It hurt me, because I had used it many times as an outreach to a lot of people to help them see what we were *all* about. Today I picked up someone else's copy of In Unity for Feb./March. Sure, I wanted to see the article they had done on me... wanted to make sure it was the way I had written it...it was, (except Creek is the tribe, not Creke!) but suddenly I found myself reading from the first page all the way through to the end again, and I felt tears coming up because here was a long lost friend! Here was the In Unity I had loved for so long and missed so sorely. I've read every line and I am more impressed than words can say. Enclosed find one tear, maybe that tells you best of all how happy I am about the Old/New In Unity.

In Christ,

Rev. Jeri Ann Harvey, Pastor
MCC - Los Angeles

subscribe to IN UNITY

Exciting things are happening in the Fellowship

By Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson

Exciting things are happening at the beginning of this new decade. Lots of catchwords and phrases are being tossed around, and I'd like to help clarify some of them.

THE 10 YEAR PLAN

The 1979 General Conference was a landmark conference, not only because it was our 10th anniversary, but because we looked ahead for the next 10 years! A summary of that "10 Year Plan" as it has come to be known is as follows:

TEN YEAR PLAN ("WHITE" PAPER) SUMMARY

In addition to already existing programs, the General Conference set these goals:

- Define "Inclusive Language"
- Provide adequate administration
- Fund Raising
- Train Ministers (clergy and lay)
- Promote growth of S.T.I.
- Restructure and make sure that Commission on Government, Structures and Systems does its work
- Begin Radio and TV Ministry

IN ORDER TO UNDERTAKE THIS:

1. NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT/
NEW EXTENSION AREA DEVELOPMENT
2. CREATE A STABLE, COMMITTED
MEMBERSHIP WITH A "FELLOWSHIP
CONSCIOUSNESS"
3. DEVELOP CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
MATERIALS/PERSONAL
EVANGELISM TOOLS
4. DEVELOP AN ECUMENICAL
WITNESS
5. PROJECT SAMARIA

IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH THIS:

"that. . . each of us take the personal responsibility to order our lives according to the teachings of Jesus the Christ and reflect in our lives our perception of God's nature, as revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, so that we may truly become the Body of Christ on this earth, to go unto all the world preaching and teaching the gospel of reconciliation." (Elders White Paper, p. 1)

It is amazing to me that, even since conference, we have really started moving on many of those 10 year goals! God is showing us that we may have been very conservative and short-sighted in making those goals. We seem to be daily out-growing them. In some way, we have begun to work on nearly every single area mentioned in the plan. I have been assigned responsibility for two new areas, and would like to share what is happening:

PROJECT SAMARIA

The first is called "PROJECT SAMARIA" (not to be confused with the "Good Samaritan" project, keep reading!). The Board of Elders approved the following understanding of the PROJECT SAMARIA:

PROJECT SAMARIA (A SUMMARY)

(Reference John 4:1-34:
The Woman at the Well)

Jesus journeyed through Samaria, symbolically and actually breaking down barriers in his time of nationalism, sexism, racism, cultural prejudice, judgmental denominationalism and religious hypocrisy. We can do no less! We need to love the world through actions as well as words.

How?



By developing "theologies of ministry" and real tools to reach out into our "Samaritan territories," into target communities (see list in "White Paper").

The Fellowship will provide Resource Packets for local churches to use in their outreach programs, including written materials, bibliographies, suggested workshops, guest speakers for consciousness-raising, methods of assessing needs and resources, "theology of ministry" statements for reflection, worship, etc.

How will these packets be developed? Under the direction of the Board of Elders, using Grass-Roots Study Model, Commission on Christian Social Action and Department of Christian Education. We need to appoint a project administrator to coordinate the efforts.

I will be coordinating Project Samaria during its first year. After that, we hope to find someone to take over that responsibility. You will begin hearing more about the project and resource packets in coming months.

"CELEBRATE: THE 80'S ARE OURS"

The second project has been called
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BE A GOOD



SAMARITAN

BOOK REVIEW *the gnostic gospels* by elaine pagels

By Rev. Valerie Anne Bouchard

One of the most provocative books to come along in quite some time is *The Gnostic Gospels* by Elaine Pagels.

It seems that an Arab peasant from the upper Egyptian desert near Nag Hammadi made an accidental but very important discovery. While digging soft soil used to fertilize crops, Mohammed Ali al-Samman uncovered a large red earthenware jar. Thinking it might be gold he broke it open only to find thirteen papyrus books, bound in leather.

After thirty years of examination by scholars it is clear that the books date back to the time of Jesus and relate very directly to the people and events known to us in the New Testament. Upon further study, it would be possible to understand that these books are alternate Gospels from a gnostic perspective revealing great disagreement and disunity in the early church as to the teachings of Jesus. The Gnostic Gospels show us that there was tremendous disagreement over the facts of Jesus' life, the meaning of his teachings and the form that the church should take. Elaine Pagels traces for the reader the fascinating struggle that took place between gnostic views and the more orthodox views that have been handed down to us through the New Testament tradition. The author shows us how gnostic beliefs were suppressed until this most significant discovery thirty years ago. We see that early Christianity was not a unified movement, but rather a movement characterized by complexity and uncertainty.

Gnosticism is known to us as one of the first heresies that represented an immense threat to the religious establishment of the early church. Yet, historically we have

never been able to be exposed to any authentic gnostic writing. We have heard what the orthodox community said about gnostics. Now we can read what the gnostics say for themselves.

The word "gnosis" means secret knowledge, and the word "gnosis" as the gnostics used it means the intuitive process of knowing oneself. To know oneself, they claimed, is to know human nature and human destiny. Ultimately, to know oneself, at the deepest level, is simultaneously to know God. That is the secret of "gnosis." It is stated that Jesus provided secret teachings in "gnosis" to those he felt were spiritually mature enough to grasp the depth of this message.

While orthodoxy views God as transcendent, as wholly other, gnostics maintained that self-knowledge is knowledge of God; that the self and God are identical. Secondly, the orthodoxy of the New Testament stresses that Jesus came to deliver us from sin and to demand our repentance. The gnostics say that Jesus hoped to bring us enlightenment and deliver us from the illusions that bind us and prevent us from living as whole and complete individuals. Jesus came as a guide who provides open access to spiritual understanding; as the God that lives within you and I.

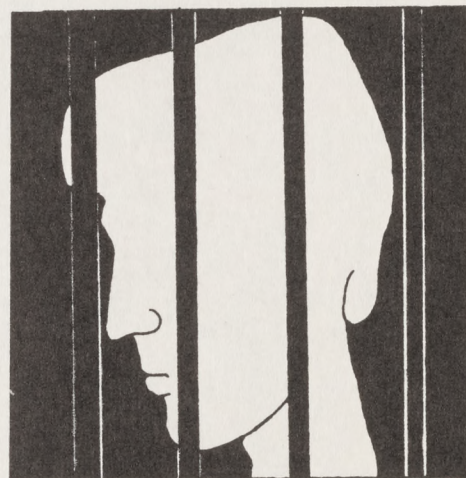
These differences in fundamental viewpoint caused tremendous tension in the early church community. Elaine Pagels takes us on a fascinating journey to show us how gnostic forms of Christianity interacted with orthodoxy; a journey that tells us about the origins of Christianity itself. We find disagreement over understandings of the resurrection, the importance of priestly authority, the presence of the divine within the human and the way to salvation. We find also that the gnostics believed in a God who was both Mother and Father and that the gnostics maintained and practiced total spiritual equality among women and men.

This book has amazing relevance for our time and for what we determine ourselves to be about as we build our own structure here within UFMCC. Churches, as institutions, have remained largely suspicious of techniques purporting to give each person direct access to divine knowledge. The institutional church believes it has a monopoly on revelation. When individuals claim to experience revelation outside of hierarchical formulae, churches behave much like big businesses do when they fear their patent rights are being violated.

The idea that each person can reach her or his own understanding of divine forces without going through the church, or God preserve us, even the Bible, is revolutionary.

What do you think? Where is God and how is God found? Did Jesus reveal secret teachings that demand a different focus for our lives than we have traditionally known? How important is the church as an institution and what should be done, if anything, to perpetuate the institution as we know it? What does it mean to be a Christian? Ask yourself a few questions and read the book. It just might be an enlightening experience.

The Gnostic Gospels
By Elaine Pagels,
Random House, N.Y. 1979



Institutional Ministries ...

The Alliance of Alien Prisoners, AAP, an organization in Canada, recently awarded an honorary membership to Rev. Bob Arthur, Director of Institutional Ministries.

The AAP is an organization that deals with international prisoners who are confined outside of their native country.

They have requested that MCC's Institutional Ministries give them input regarding their development of half-way houses in Canada and the United States.

Commenting about the honorary membership, Rev. Arthur said, "It was quite unexpected but very rewarding."

He explained that MCC has only recently begun working with AAP. He said that since the General Conference confirmed our outreach to other countries, this is one of the first contacts on an international scope.

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"The Good Samaritan Project", or "Celebrate: the 80's are Ours." This year, we are holding Fellowship dinners in 15 cities in the U.S. and Western Europe in our first major educational/fund-raising effort outside of the local MCC church. We will hold these "events" in Los Angeles, Dallas, Kansas City, Washington D.C., Houston, Atlanta, London, Copenhagen, San Francisco, San Diego, Cincinnati, New York, Ft. Lauderdale, Chicago and Denver.

The major feature of the evening in each city will be a multi-media presentation of the history/ministry of the UFMCC and an address by Rev. Perry. We hope to reach new people, to reach business people and community leaders in and out of the gay and Christian communities.

We also hope to be able to renew and re-vitalize our long-time members and friends and supporters.

In undertaking this major effort, the Fellowship has enlisted the support and cooperation of local churches and local talent. We want, through these "events", to stimulate new interest in our local churches all over the world. It has been a wonderful (and reassuring!) experience for me to feel the support and love and enthusiasm from pastors, Boards of Directors and interested laypeople for this project. I am really tempted to re-phrase the much debated Athanasian creed and have it read: outside of the local church, there is no Fellowship!"

Our multi-media presentation is a real adventure and experiment. We have

involved top-quality professional help, and many of our own talented people. It has truly been a "family" process involving filmmakers, journalists, Elders, editors and many people from all over the Fellowship who have sent us slides, etc. We are thrilled to announce that this presentation will be available for rental or purchase by our local churches in 1981.

Most of our evening "events" will be held in major hotels, although arrangements will vary from city to city. We invite everyone to consider participating. Mostly, we invite you to remember both "Project Samaria" and "Celebrate: The 80's Are Ours" in your prayers, and in your hearts this year.

Letters

Dear Editor:

On February 29, Starr, Annie and I went to Indy to appear before the National Republican Platform Committee. I had the great fun of testifying before the Committee and thought you'd like to run an article in IN UNITY about that. Enclosed is a copy of the written statement I gave them and I'm going to ask all the Districts to pass resolutions supporting it. I was video-taped by the party and by the local TV stations -- also, there were numerous members of the written press there. The Republicans gave me a very warm reception and asked some questions such as taxation problems and was I intending to talk to the Democrats. The Chair of the panel was Governor Bowen of Indiana. I'm not real sure what will come of all this but we must try.

Before reading the written statement, I reminded them that the Democrats have always been identified with social reform and that we were providing the Republicans with an opportunity to change that. That seemed to get them where they live and I won't be surprised if I hear more from them.

The whole thing was like taking the problem to them on enemy ground and it would be fair to say that I now have some inkling of how Moses must have felt asking to "Let my people go." The whole experience was probably the most significant thing I've ever done and it really felt good. Now I'm planning on testifying before the Democrats if all goes well.

Steve Stahl

Republican Platform Committee
Indianapolis, Indiana
February 29, 1980

The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is a Christian Church with a strong commitment to the Golden Rule. We believe that it is our Christian duty to reach out to all people - regardless of race, national origin, gender or affectional preference.

The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States reflects a national intention to insure equal rights and justice for all persons. However, two centuries after the founding of this Republic, there remain groups of persons excluded from basic human rights; even at a time when "Basic Human Rights" have become watch-words of our national policy.

One such group, the Lesbian/Gay community, represents at least 10% of the population of the United States. Equal justice and treatment under law is being withheld from us. We are subject to discrimination in housing, employment, credit, insurance and taxation.

Therefore, we recommend that the Republican Party incorporate into their platform a plank urging one of the following actions:

1. An executive order ending all discrimination against any person or group.
2. An Act of Congress extending the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to cover all persons regardless of race, gender, national origin or af-

fectional preference.

The Christian Social Action Taskforce,
Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit

Co-chairpersons

B. Starr Brooks
Stephen F. Stahl

request articles

IN UNITY plans on running a composite of short articles (with pictures if possible) on being a gay parent. If you are a gay parent and would like to contribute an article please forward it to:

IN UNITY
5300 Santa Monica Blvd. No. 304
Los Angeles, CA 90029

Articles may include personal feelings, coming out to children, unusual or humorous experiences, societal pressures, acceptance, etc.

IF YOU ARE A GAY TEENAGER and would like to contribute articles to IN UNITY about being a gay teen, please send to the above address. Please include your name (must accompany all articles but name may be withheld upon request), age, indicate male or female, city and state.

Articles may be topical: Coming out, peer pressure and acceptance, being in the closet and what that is like, social circles, who can be trusted, etc.

All articles should be typed and double spaced when possible.

fellowship family



BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

At the recent Spiritual Renewal at MCC Baltimore on February 4, 5 and 6, our Founder and the Moderator of the Board of Elders, Rev. Troy Perry, was the guest speaker. As always, he lifted our spirits by his challenge to lead all our brothers and sisters to Christ through the loving joy and fulfillment of the knowledge of Christ and Christianity. He rejoiced with us that we had come this far but urged us that if the world is to be redeemed, we must be the ones to do the work in Christ's name. He also urged us to find larger facilities to serve the Gay community as we are now "bulging at the seams."

For three consecutive nights, we sang hymns, prayed, and heard the messages and readings from the Bible. At the close of the Renewal and under the leadership of our Choir Director/Organist, the combined choir of MCC Baltimore and St. Peter



The combined choirs of MCC Baltimore and St. Peter Claver Roman Catholic Church participated in the evening worship and Spiritual Renewal Services at MCC Baltimore. The choirs are directed by Director of Music, Terry Snowden of MCC Baltimore.

with a concert of sacred and gospel music.

The three days were also marked by social events as well. The Ministerial Staff and the Board of Directors, along with their respective lovers or spouses, had dinner with Rev. Perry at one of Baltimore's best Chinese Restaurants, the Golden Star. After each service, there was a fellowship hour with refreshments served and ending the three nights with a large sheet cake donated by a member of the congregation in honor of Rev. Perry's visit. Rev. Perry also had private meetings with a number of our Ministerial Staff and members of the congregation.

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

MCC Tallahassee recently held a weekend seminar called "Temptation of Life."

The seminar was designed to help expand Gay Christian Awareness and to proclaim that God called us to be whole and multi-faceted children of God.

Weekend activities included lectures and discussions on such topics as "Toward World Peace" and "The Death Penalty and Prison Reform." A Bible class on the Bible and Homosexuality was also held.

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

Rev. Sky Anderson, pastor of MCC San Jose, was elected to the Board of Directors of the Santa Clara County Council of Churches. MCC is a member of the Council. Anderson also served as chaplain for the month for the City Council of San Jose.

FT. WORTH, TEXAS

Agape MCC in Ft. Worth re-dedicated their building after re-modeling. A special conference was also held with Rev. Don Eastman speaking on "Not a Sin, Not a Sickness."

QUINCY, ILLINOIS

At a recent congregational meeting, MCC Illiano voted unanimously to begin charter proceedings. To prepare for this, 14 Standing Operating Procedures were adopted and two people were added to the board of directors.

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

Rev. Stan Harris, World Church Extension Officer assigned to spark church re-establishment and expansion in Oceania, arrived at Auckland, New Zealand on January 9, and was greeted warmly by Don Mence, worship co-ordinator of MCC-Auckland.

Since arriving Rev. Harris has greeted members of the local congregation, attended various meetings of the gay community leaders, and extended an open invitation for all to worship at St. Mathews in the City, present home of MCC-Auckland. In response more than 35 civic leaders attended the January 19 worship service at which Rev. Harris was guest preacher and celebrant. Average weekly attendance has been 75.

Definite contact has been re-established with a group worshipping under the banner and name of UFMCC in Wellington and Rev. Harris visited the group in early February. Further outreaches are now being established with leaders in Hamilton, Napier, New Plymouth, Ohakune, Whangerei, and Christchurch. Members and friends of MCC are urged to forward names, addresses and phone numbers of any friends in these church extension areas.

TAMPA, FLORIDA

An arsonist set nine separate fires in the Tampa Church recently. Damage occurred to the inside of the church with no structural damage resulting. Apparently the altar had been set but went out on its own. Damage was about \$5,000.

Early Sunday morning, around 4:30 a.m., someone driving by noticed smoke and the fire department was called to the scene.

The fire did not keep people away as 88 were in attendance for the evening worship service.

Prior to the fire threatening phone calls had been received and a letter was delivered to the church which contained a picture of the Church engulfed in flames with two crosses turned upside down above the building. The letters were from "the leader of the Scourge, of the Church of Rome."

The arsonist was apprehended.

NORTHWEST DISTRICT

The Northwest District is holding a retreat on June 21 through June 29 at Humboldt State University in Arcata.

The week long retreat which is open to the Fellowship will provide seminars, youth programs, recreational programs and spirit-filled worship.

Seminar leaders will include Rosalind Rinker, Rev. Elder John Hose, Rev. Elder Troy Perry and Rev. Jeffrey D. Pulling.

One of the worship services will be a ballet, written by Jim Kerber of MCC East Bay.

For registration forms and more information write M. Mank, 38 Bonview, San Francisco, California.

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

The lawsuit against Jackson State Prison, Jackson, MI, is scheduled for a pre-trial conference in the court of appeals this April. Under current policies, Metropolitan Community Church is denied the right to share the sacraments with inmates or hold worship services within the prison. The basis for this denial has been that U.F.M.C.C. is not a "valid" Christian Church because our primary outreach is to the gay community.

With the pre-trial hearing date fast approaching, and our funds exhausted, we are once again appealing to you for whatever financial support you can offer. The prison ministry team here at M.C.C.D.

work very diligently year-round to keep in contact with inmates through the pen-pal programs, work closely with parole/probation officers to help facilitate the transition from prison to street. Your contribution makes you a part of this on-going ministry.

When you give, please designate your donation for the prison lawsuit if that is where you wish to contribute.

Rick A. Brown
Area Representative
Institutional Ministry

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

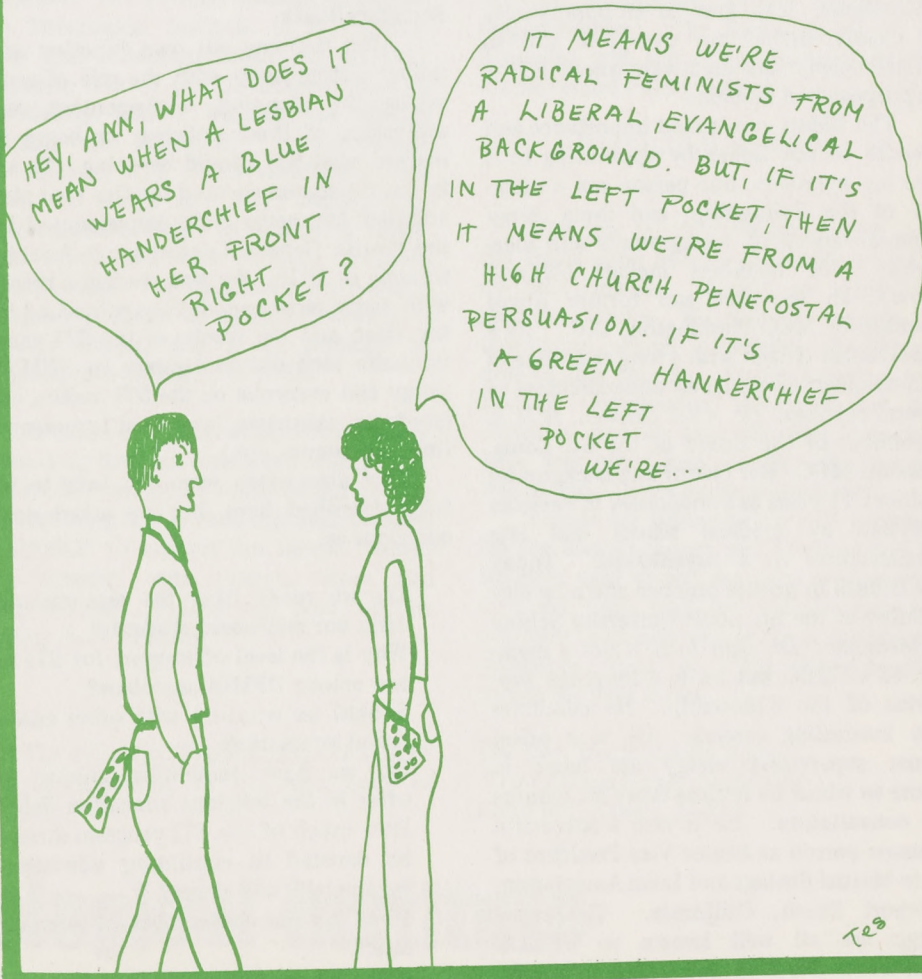
Good Shepherd Parish MCC will be moving under one roof in August to share a building with the Wellington United Church of Christ where MCC presently holds its worship services.

The church's drama group, the Shepherd Players, will take over the 250 seat theater at the church building. The balcony will be converted into offices.

The move is expected to close the ties between the United Church of Christ and Good Shepherd Parish.

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FELLOWSHIP FUNNIES



A DREAM COMING TRUE: Reflections of Board of Regents

By the Rev. James E. Sandmire
Chairperson

By late afternoon on March 8, eight normally restrained members and ministers of UFMCC were in a euphoric, excited mood. We had just completed the first meeting of the newly appointed Board of Regents for Samaritan Theological Institute. When the meeting began, many of us were unacquainted and unsure of what we were to do. When the meeting concluded we were a united, determined team with a shared vision for STI as a vital part of the prophetic ministry of our Fellowship.

The meeting was significant from the beginning. In changing our name to the Board of Regents, the Elders brought STI into conformity with other educational institutions. This gave us an opportunity to clearly define our own role and to reflect deeply and creatively about STI -- its purpose and mission.

The Elders gave added importance and breadth to our Board by appointing to it two lay members, one person not a member of the Fellowship, and three clergy from a variety of backgrounds and locations. The members include *Gilberto Gerald*, an architect and former Board member of MCC Washington, D.C.. As a Panamanian citizen with a long residence in this country, he brings an understanding of several cultures. *Dr. Alice Kitchen, M.D.* is a member of the Board of the St. Louis, Missouri MCC. Her fascinating background includes 11 years as a missionary in Pakistan followed by medical school and late specialization as a psychiatrist. Today she is both in private practice and a faculty member at the St. Louis University School of Medicine. *Dr. Don Jolly* is not a member of UFMCC but he is a longtime supporter of the Fellowship. He combines two interesting careers. He is a priest whose supervisory clergy are based in Rome to which he returns every six months for consultation. He is also a successful business person as Senior Vice President of State Mutual Savings and Loan Association, Newport Beach, California. The three clergy are all well known to UFMCC members. *The Rev. John Hose* (Atlanta,

Georgia) and the *Rev. Nancy Wilson* (Los Angeles, California) are currently members of the Board of Elders. *The Rev. James Sandmire* is a former member of the Board of Elders. Both the Rev. Hose and the Rev. Sandmire have served as past presidents of STI. With this diversity of background and depth of experience, it is not surprising that discussion was lively. Also participating actively with us were the two staff members of STI: the Rev. Jeffrey Pulling - Dean and the Rev. Pepper Shields - Registrar. They served as excellent resource people and gave us much needed help in forming and expressing our ideas.

The Rev. Sandmire had been named Chairperson of the Board of Regents. The Regents then elected Dr. Kitchen as Vice-chairperson and the Rev. Wilson as Secretary/Clerk.

After defining our own function as a policy setting body with the role of overseeing the planning, implementing, and evaluating of these policies, we began to discuss what STI should be doing. To aid in our discussion we used the five year plan adopted but never fully implemented by the Fourth General Conference in Atlanta, Georgia in 1973. We also studied a report with many recommendations submitted by the Dean and the results of the STI questionnaire sent out in January to UFMCC clergy and everyone on the STI mailing list (students, exhorters, interested laypersons, financial donors, etc.).

Our discussions were too long to be fully described here, but we asked such questions as:

Do we really have the resources to train our ministerial students?

Why is the level of support for STI so low among UFMCC members?

Should we compete with other established seminaries?

Do we have something unique to offer in the religious education field? How much of the STI program should be devoted to continuing education for the laity and clergy?

What are the advantages of accreditation?

How can we build sufficient financial

support for better facilities, a larger paid staff, a paid faculty?

What is the image of STI in and out of the Fellowship? How much of the image is true, if any?

What has happened to STI graduates? How many finish the program?

How successful are the short seminars and correspondence courses? Should this area be pulled back, changed, or expanded?

Are there drawbacks to being located in Los Angeles? Is there a "California prejudice?" Is it warranted?

Can we establish other campus locations outside of Los Angeles?

What kind of research and writing should we be encouraging? What is our relationship to other academic bodies? To THE GAY CHRISTIAN? What problems are offered to us by the ecumenical thrust of the Fellowship and the varied backgrounds of our members?

Is there a special function for STI vis-a-vis the unique ministry of this Fellowship? Can this function, if it can be defined, be performed in any other way or by any other institution as well or better? Once again, is there any real need for STI?

It is clear from these and other questions that all possibilities were to be open to us and that hard questions were to be asked. At the risk of vast oversimplification, our shared conclusions are summarized as follows:

- 1) We affirmed the remarkable work of the Rev. Jeff Pulling as Dean of STI. We recognized he had raised STI standards by making it a senior college. This change materially improved the standards of teaching and scholarship. We further commended his development of short seminars and correspondence courses as an effective continuing education program for both clergy and laity.
- 2) We acknowledged the major conclusions of the STI questionnaire.

They implied that STI should continue to offer educational programs to ministerial students, clergy, and laity; that courses be offered not only in Los Angeles but in other centers geographically dispersed; that quality be maintained and upgraded; and that the major financing of STI be through the UFMCC budget combined with other funding sources.

- 3) We concluded that STI should offer more than ministerial training and continuing education. In addition to instruction, STI should provide a center for study and reflection about the unique aspects of our Fellowship's prophetic ministry as defined in the Six Questions of Faith, Fellowship, and Order, namely the impact of inclusive Christianity, of Christian sexuality, and of human liberation.
- 4) We further concluded that this thrust gave STI an important outreach to traditional seminaries and church organizations. These institutions do not provide an adequate approach to it, particularly as it relates to gay and lesbian clergy and lay Christians.
- 5) We concluded that the only Fellowship-wide body that might properly provide a continuing education program in the prophetic ministry of UFMCC for all our members and clergy is Samaritan Theological Institute.
- 6) We concluded that an adequate educational outreach as described here required the development of the STI program throughout the Fellowship. To that end the establishment of resource and educational centers throughout the Fellowship should be encouraged. Initially these centers should be established with regard to both other seminary or church related institutions and to geographical diversity. We decided that a resource center should be established in the San Francisco Bay area in proximity to the Graduate Theological Union immediately under the direction of the Rev. Pulling, with centers to be established in the near future in Washington, D.C. and possibly in Chicago. To continue the development of the senior college in Los Angeles, we embarked on a Fellowship-wide search

for a properly qualified Dean to replace the Rev. Pulling when he moves to Oakland to head our resource center there and to take on his duties as Pastor of MCC East Bay.



In summary, we concluded that the major thrust of STI should be toward study and reflection with regard to our prophetic ministry. We felt that the training of ministerial students, qualifying such students, and the continuing education of clergy and laity should be ways in which this major thrust should be implemented.

It was obvious to us that this vital mission required a coordinated educational and fund raising program to secure the general support of the Fellowship for STI. As a basis for such a program, we adopted the following Statement of Purpose:

"Samaritan Theological Institute is an educational institution of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. The primary mission of Samaritan Theological Institute is to generate study and reflection about the uniquely prophetic task of the UFMCC in inclusive Christianity and a theology of human sexuality and liberation. To accomplish this mission, STI offers continuing education for clergy and laity, trains ministerial students, assists in qualifying ministerial candidates, and provides reasearch opportunities. The Institute has a resident college, a program of extended studies, a resource center, and a lay program of Christian renewal called EXCEL."

At the end of a physically and mentally exhausting day, we concluded with prayer. We left determined to continue our promising beginning and to challenge each member of UFMCC to support this special Fellowship ministry with prayers, ideas, and pocketbooks. *Believe me, you will be hearing from us again.*

The *STI QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS* will be appearing in the next issue of *In Unity*.

continued from page 29

FELLOWSHIP FAMILY

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

Metropolitan Community Church of the East Bay in Oakland, California, has elected the Reverend Jeffrey D. Pulling as their new pastor.

The Reverend Claudia L. Vierra, who has been pastor of M.C.C. East Bay for the past three and one-half years and built the church from an active membership of 7 to nearly forty, left on March 23 to become a minister in residence in M.C.C. Boise, Idaho, where her spouse the Reverend B. J. McDaniels is the newly-elected pastor.

During the Reverend Vierra's pastorate, her first after being licensed in M.C.C. Sacramento, many exciting changes came about in the church -- the most dramatic being the purchase of a church building last year at 4986 Fairfax Street in Oakland.

The Reverend Pulling, currently Dean of Samaritan Theological Institute, will assume his duties at East Bay during the Northwest District Retreat June 21 following the completion of his Spring STI responsibilities. The Reverend James E. Sandmire will act as interim pastor until the Reverend Pulling arrives.

HONOLULU, HAWAII

This last Sunday, February 24th, was my installation here in Honolulu as pastor of MCC-Hawaii. It was an absolutely glorious service. We had 91 people in attendance, which is probably the highest ever in this church. Austin Amerine, our District Coordinator, officiated for the occasion, and he gave the best sermon I have ever heard him preach. The service was so good I even enjoyed it myself!

Things are beginning to pull together for the Hawaii church, and I believe that in the next year we will see some real growth. It is my hope that we will also have an outreach to at least one of the outer islands (probably Maui or "The Big Island") before the year is out.

The Rev. Denis Moore, Pastor
1100 Alakea Street, Suite 407
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

samaritan theological institute

